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THE WORKS OF
J. M. BARRIE
PETER PAN EDITION

VOLUME VIII

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J. M. BARRIE'S MOTHER

MARGARET OGILVY
AND OTHERS

BY

J. M. BARRIE

WITHDRAWN

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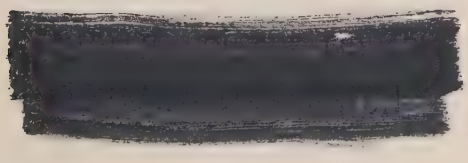

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INTRODUCTION

"MARGARET OGILVY" was written under an emotional idea, prevalent in my young days, that a son may owe much or everything to his mother. It is evidently a very old-fashioned idea now, when the exposure of parents has become, especially in literature, the first step to emancipation. In this matter, however, I must remain old-fashioned, though indeed the little work is nothing if it is not an exposure of Margaret Ogilvy, and so in a sense I am up to date after all. I am far from meaning that the new ways of writing are not often better than the old. The old are exhausted, and without a search for new ways it would be better perhaps to stop. Had I had the sense or the capacity to be more "modern" I could, I think, in certain of my other efforts have done myself, and incidentally readers, some service.

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MARGARET OGILVY

BY HER SON

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY SISTER JANE ANN

CHAPTER I

HOW MY MOTHER GOT HER SOFT FACE

On the day I was born we bought six hair-bottomed chairs, and in our little house it was an event, the first great victory in a woman's long campaign; how they had been laboured for, the pound-note and the thirty threepenny bits they cost, what anxiety there was about the purchase, the show they made in possession of the west room, my father's unnatural coolness when he brought them in (but his face was white)—I so often heard the tale afterwards, and shared as boy and man in so many similar triumphs, that the coming of the chairs seems to be something I remember, as if I had jumped out of bed on that first day, and run ben to see how they looked. I am sure my mother's feet were ettling to be ben long before they could be trusted, and that the moment after she was left alone with me she was discovered barefooted in the west room, doctoring a scar (which she had been the first to detect) on one of the chairs, or sitting on them regally or withdrawing and re-opening the door suddenly to take the six by surprise. And then, I think,

a shawl was flung over her (it is strange to me to think it was not I who ran after her with the shawl), and she was escorted sternly back to bed and reminded that she had promised not to budge, to which her reply was probably that she had been gone but an instant, and the implication that therefore she had not been gone at all. Thus was one little bit of her revealed to me at once: I wonder if I took note of it. Neighbours came in to see the boy and the chairs. I wonder if she deceived me when she affected to think that there were others like us, or whether I saw through her from the first, she was so easily seen through. When she seemed to agree with them that it would be impossible to give me a college education, was I so easily taken in, or did I know already what ambitions burned behind that dear face? when they spoke of the chairs as the goal quickly reached, was I such a newcomer that her timid lips must say "They are but a beginning" before I heard the words? And when we were left together, did I laugh at the great things that were in her mind, or had she to whisper them to me first, and then did I put my arm round her and tell her that I would help? Thus it was for such a long time: it is strange to me to feel that it was not so from the beginning.

It is all guess-work for six years, and she whom I see in them is the woman who came suddenly into view when they were at an end. Her timid lips I

have said, but they were not timid then, and when I knew her the timid lips had come. The soft face —they say the face was not so soft then. The shawl that was flung over her—we had not begun to hunt her with a shawl, nor to make our bodies a screen between her and the draughts, nor to creep into her room a score of times in the night to stand looking at her as she slept. We did not see her becoming little then, nor sharply turn our heads when she said wonderingly how small her arms had grown. In her happiest moments—and never was a happier woman—her mouth did not of a sudden begin to twitch, and tears to lie on the mute blue eyes in which I have read all I know and would ever care to write. For when you looked into my mother's eyes you knew, as if He had told you, why God sent her into the world—it was to open the minds of all who looked to beautiful thoughts. And that is the beginning and end of literature. Those eyes that I cannot see until I was six years old have guided me through life, and I pray God they may remain my only earthly judge to the last. They were never more my guide than when I helped to put her to earth, not whimpering because my mother had been taken away after seventy-six glorious years of life, but exulting in her even at the grave.

She had a son who was far away at school. I remember very little about him, only that he was a

merry-faced boy who ran like a squirrel up a tree and shook the cherries into my lap. When he was thirteen and I was half his age the terrible news came, and I have been told the face of my mother was awful in its calmness as she set off to get between Death and her boy. We trooped with her down the brae to the wooden station, and I think I was envying her the journey in the mysterious waggons; I know we played around her, proud of our right to be there, but I do not recall it, I only speak from hearsay. Her ticket was taken, she had bidden us good-bye with that fighting face which I cannot see, and then my father came out of the telegraph-office and said huskily "He's gone!" Then we turned very quietly and went home again up the little brae. But I speak from hearsay no longer; I knew my mother for ever now.

That is how she got her soft face and her pathetic ways and her large charity, and why other mothers ran to her when they had lost a child. "Dinna greet, poor Janet," she would say to them, and they would answer, "Ah, Margaret, but you're greeting yoursel'." Margaret Ogilvy had been her maiden name, and after the Scotch custom she was still Margaret Ogilvy to her old friends. Margaret Ogilvy I loved to name her. Often when I was a boy, "Margaret Ogilvy, are you there?" I would call up the stair.

She was always delicate from that hour, and for

many months she was very ill. I have heard that the first thing she expressed a wish to see was the christening robe, and she looked long at it and then turned her face to the wall. That was what made me as a boy think of it always as the robe in which he was christened, but I knew later that we had all been christened in it, from the oldest of the family to the youngest, between whom stood twenty years. Hundreds of other children were christened in it also, such robes being then a rare possession, and the lending of ours among my mother's glories. It was carried carefully from house to house, as if it were itself a child; my mother made much of it, smoothed it out, petted it, smiled to it before putting it into the arms of those to whom it was being lent; she was in our pew to see it borne magnificently (something inside it now) down the aisle to the pulpit side, when a stir of expectancy went through the church and we kicked each other's feet beneath the bookboard but were reverent in the face; and however the child might behave, laughing brazenly or skirling to its mother's shame, and whatever the father as he held it up might do, look doited probably and bow at the wrong time, the christening robe of long experience helped them through. And when it was brought back to her she took it in her arms as softly as if it might be asleep, and unconsciously pressed it to her breast: there was never anything in the house that

spoke to her quite so eloquently as that little white robe; it was the one of her children that always remained a baby. And she had not made it herself, which was the most wonderful thing about it to me, for she seemed to have made all other things. All the clothes in the house were of her making, and you don't know her in the least if you think they were out of the fashion; she turned them and made them new again, she beat them and made them new again, and then she coaxed them into being new again just for the last time, she let them out and took them in and put on new braid, and added a piece up the back, and thus they passed from one member of the family to another until they reached the youngest, and even when we were done with them they reappeared as something else. In the fashion! I must come back to this. Never was a woman with such an eye for it. She had no fashion-plates; she did not need them. The minister's wife (a cloak), the banker's daughters (the new sleeve)—they had but to pass our window once, and the scalp, so to speak, was in my mother's hands. Observe her rushing, scissors in hand, thread in mouth, to the drawers where her daughters' Sabbath clothes were kept. Or go to church next Sunday, and watch a certain family filing in, the boy lifting his legs high to show off his new boots, but all the others demure, especially the timid, unobservant looking little woman in the rear

of them. If you were the minister's wife that day or the banker's daughters you would have got a shock. But she bought the christening robe, and when I used to ask why, she would beam and look conscious, and say she wanted to be extravagant once. And she told me, still smiling, that the more a woman was given to stitching and making things for herself, the greater was her passionate desire now and again to rush to the shops and "be foolish." The christening robe with its pathetic frills is over half a century old now, and has begun to droop a little, like a daisy whose time is past, but it is as fondly kept together as ever: I saw it in use again only the other day.

My mother lay in bed with the christening robe beside her, and I peeped in many times at the door and then went to the stair and sat on it and sobbed. I know not if it was that first day, or many days afterwards, that there came to me my sister, the daughter my mother loved the best, yes, more I am sure even than she loved me, whose great glory she has been since I was six years old. This sister, who was then passing out of her teens, came to me with a very anxious face and wringing her hands, and she told me to go ben to my mother and say to her that she still had another boy. I went ben excitedly, but the room was dark, and when I heard the door shut and no sound come from the bed I was afraid, and I stood still. I suppose I was breathing hard, or perhaps I

was crying, for after a time I heard a listless voice that had never been listless before say, "Is that you?" I think the tone hurt me, for I made no answer, and then the voice said more anxiously, "Is that you?" again. I thought it was the dead boy she was speaking to, and I said in a little lonely voice, "No, it's no him, it's just me." Then I heard a cry, and my mother turned in bed, and though it was dark I knew that she was holding out her arms.

After that I sat a great deal in her bed trying to make her forget him, which was my crafty way of playing physician, and if I saw any one out of doors do something that made the others laugh I immediately hastened to that dark room and did it before her. I suppose I was an odd little figure; I have been told that my anxiety to brighten her gave my face a strained look and put a tremor into the joke (I would stand on my head in the bed, my feet against the wall, and then cry excitedly, "Are you laughing, mother?")—and perhaps what made her laugh was something I was unconscious of, but she did laugh suddenly now and then, whereupon I screamed exultantly to that dear sister, who was ever in waiting, to come and see the sight, but by the time she came the soft face was wet again. Thus I was deprived of some of my glory, and I remember once only making her laugh before witnesses. I kept a record of her laughs on a piece of paper, a stroke for each, and it

was my custom to show this proudly to the doctor every morning. There were five strokes the first time I slipped it into his hand, and when their meaning was explained to him, he laughed so boisterously that I cried, "I wish that was one of hers!" Then he was sympathetic, and asked me if my mother had seen the paper yet, and when I shook my head he said that if I showed it to her now and told her that these were her five laughs he thought I might win another. I had less confidence, but he was the mysterious man whom you ran for in the dead of night (you flung sand at his window to waken him, and if it was only toothache he extracted the tooth through the open window, but when it was something sterner he was with you in the dark square at once, like a man who slept in his topcoat), so I did as he bade me, and not only did she laugh then but again when I put the laugh down, so that though it was really one laugh with a tear in the middle I counted it as two.

It was doubtless that same sister who told me not to sulk when my mother lay thinking of him, but to try instead to get her to talk about him. I did not see how this could make her the merry mother she used to be, but I was told that if I could not do it nobody could, and this made me eager to begin. At first, they say, I was often jealous, stopping her fond memories with the cry, "Do you mind nothing about

me?" but that did not last; its place was taken by an intense desire (again, I think, my sister must have breathed it into life) to become so like him that even my mother should not see the difference, and many and artful were the questions I put to that end. Then I practised in secret, but after a whole week had passed I was still rather like myself. He had such a cheery way of whistling, she had told me, it had always brightened her at her work to hear him whistling, and when he whistled he stood with his legs apart, and his hands in the pockets of his knickerbockers. I decided to trust to this, so one day after I had learned his whistle (every boy of enterprise invents a whistle of his own) from boys who had been his comrades, I secretly put on a suit of his clothes, dark grey they were, with little spots, and they fitted me many years afterwards, and thus disguised I slipped, unknown to the others, into my mother's room. Quaking, I doubt not, yet so pleased, I stood still until she saw me, and then—how it must have hurt her! "Listen!" I cried in a glow of triumph, and I stretched my legs wide apart and plunged my hands into the pockets of my knickerbockers, and began to whistle.

She lived twenty-nine years after his death—such active years, until toward the end, that you never knew where she was unless you took hold of her—and though she was frail henceforth and ever grow-

ing frailer, her housekeeping again became famous, so that brides called as a matter of course to watch her ca'ming and sanding and stitching: there are old people still, one or two, to tell with wonder in their eyes how she could bake twenty-four bannocks in the hour, and not a chip in one of them. And how many she gave away, how much she gave away of all she had, and what pretty ways she had of giving it! Her face beamed and rippled with mirth as before, and her laugh, that I had tried so hard to force, came running home again. I have heard no such laugh as hers save from merry children; the laughter of most of us ages, and wears out with the body, but hers remained gleeful to the last, as if it were born afresh every morning. There was always something of the child in her, and her laugh was its voice, as eloquent of the past to me as was the christening robe to her. But I had not made her forget the bit of her that was dead; in those nine and twenty years he was not removed one day farther from her. Many a time she fell asleep speaking to him, and even while she slept her lips moved and she smiled as if he had come back to her, and when she woke he might vanish so suddenly that she started up bewildered and looked about her, and then said slowly, "My David's dead!" or perhaps he remained long enough to whisper why he must leave her now, and then she lay silent with filmy eyes. When I became a man and he was

still a boy of thirteen, I wrote a little paper called "Dead this Twenty Years," which was about a similar tragedy in another woman's life, and it is the only thing I have written that she never spoke about, not even to that daughter she loved the best. No one ever spoke of it to her, or asked her if she had read it: one does not ask a mother if she knows that there is a little coffin in the house. She read many times the book in which it is printed, but when she came to that chapter she would put her hands to her heart or even over her ears.

CHAPTER II

WHAT SHE HAD BEEN

WHAT she had been, what I should be, these were the two great subjects between us in my boyhood, and while we discussed the one we were deciding the other, though neither of us knew it.

Before I reached my tenth year a giant entered my native place in the night, and we woke to find him in possession. He transformed it into a new town at a rate with which we boys only could keep up, for as fast as he built dams we made rafts to sail in them; he knocked down houses, and there we were crying, "Pilly!" among the ruins; he dug trenches, and we jumped them; we had to be dragged by the legs from beneath his engines; he sunk wells, and in we went. But though there were never circumstances to which boys could not adapt themselves in half an hour, older folk are slower in the uptake, and I am sure they stood and gaped at the changes so suddenly being worked in our midst, and scarce knew their way home now in the dark. Where had been formerly but the click of the shuttle was soon the roar of "power," hand-looms were pushed into a corner

as a room is cleared for a dance, every morning at half-past five the town was awakened with a yell, and from a chimney-stalk that rose high into our caller air the conqueror waved for evermore his flag of smoke. Another era had dawned, new customs, new fashions sprang into life, all as lusty as if they had been born at twenty-one; as quickly as two people may exchange seats, the daughter, till now but a knitter of stockings, became the breadwinner, he who had been the breadwinner sat down to the knitting of stockings; what had been yesterday a nest of weavers was to-day a town of girls.

I am not of those who would fling stones at the change; it is something, surely, that backs are no longer prematurely bent; you may no more look through dim panes of glass at the aged poor weaving tremulously for their little bit of ground in the cemetery. Rather are their working years too few now, not because they will it so, but because it is with youth that the power-looms must be fed. Well, this teaches them to make provision, and they have the means as they never had before. Not in batches are boys now sent to college, the half-dozen a year have dwindled to one, doubtless because in these days they can begin to draw wages as they step out of their fourteenth year. Here assuredly there is loss, but all the losses would be but a pebble in a sea of gain were it not for this, that with so many of the family, young mothers

among them, working in the factories, home life is not so beautiful as it was. So much of what is great in Scotland has sprung from the closeness of the family ties; it is there I sometimes fear that my country is being struck. That we are all being reduced to one dead level, that "character" abounds no more and life itself is less interesting, such things I have read, but I do not believe them. I have even seen them given as my reason for writing of a past time, and in that at least there is no truth. In our little town, which is a sample of many, life is as interesting, as pathetic, as joyous as ever it was; no group of weavers was better to look at or think about than the rivulet of winsome girls that overruns our streets every time the sluice is raised, the comedy of summer evenings and winter firesides is played with the old zest, and every window-blind is the curtain of a romance. Once the lights of a little town are lit, who could ever hope to tell all its story, or the story of a single wynd in it? And who looking at lighted windows needs to turn to books? The reason my books deal with the past instead of with the life I myself have known is simply this, that I soon grow tired of writing tales unless I can see a little girl, of whom my mother has told me, wandering confidently through the pages. Such a grip has her memory of her girlhood had upon me since I was a boy of six.

Those innumerable talks with her made her youth as vivid to me as my own, and so much more quaint, for, to a child, the oddest of things, and the most richly coloured picture-book, is that his mother was once a child also, and the contrast between what she is and what she was is perhaps the source of all humour. My mother's father, the one hero of her life, died nine years before I was born, and I remember this with bewilderment, so familiarly does the weather-beaten mason's figure rise before me from the old chair on which I was nursed and now write my books. On the surface he is as hard as the stone on which he chiselled, and his face is dyed red by its dust, he is rounded in the shoulders and a "hoast" hunts him ever; sooner or later that cough must carry him off, but until then it shall not keep him from the quarry, nor shall his chapped hands, as long as they can grasp the mell. It is a night of rain or snow, and my mother, the little girl in a pinafore who is already his housekeeper, has been many times to the door to look for him. At last he draws nigh, hoasting. Or I see him setting off to church, for he was a great "stoop" of the Auld Licht kirk, and his mouth is very firm now as if there were a case of discipline to face, but on his way home he is bowed with pity. Perhaps his little daughter who saw him so stern an hour ago does not understand why he wrestles so long in prayer to-night, or why when he

rises from his knees he presses her to him with unwonted tenderness. Or he is in this chair repeating to her his favourite poem, "The Cameronian's Dream," and at the first lines so solemnly uttered,

In a dream of the night I was wafted away,

she screams with excitement, just as I screamed long afterwards when she repeated them in his voice to me. Or I watch, as from a window, while she sets off through the long parks to the distant place where he is at work, in her hand a flaggon which contains his dinner. She is singing to herself and gleefully swinging the flaggon, she jumps the burn and proudly measures the jump with her eye, but she never dallies unless she meets a baby, for she was so fond of babies that she must hug each one she met, but while she hugged them she also noted how their robes were cut, and afterwards made paper patterns, which she concealed jealously, and in the fullness of time her first robe for her eldest born was fashioned from one of these patterns, made when she was in her twelfth year.

She was eight when her mother's death made her mistress of the house and mother to her little brother, and from that time she scrubbed and mended and baked and sewed, and argued with the flesher about the quarter-pound of beef and penny bone which

provided dinner for two days (but if you think that this was poverty you don't know the meaning of the word), and she carried the water from the pump, and had her washing days and her ironings and a stocking always on the wire for odd moments, and gossiped like a matron with the other women, and humoured the men with a tolerant smile—all these things she did as a matter of course, leaping joyful from bed in the morning because there was so much to do, doing it as thoroughly and sedately as if the brides were already due for a lesson, and then rushing out in a fit of childishness to play dumps or palaulays with others of her age. I see her frocks lengthening, though they were never very short, and the games given reluctantly up. The horror of my boyhood was that I knew a time would come when I also must give up the games, and how it was to be done I saw not (this agony still returns to me in dreams, when I catch myself playing marbles, and look on with cold displeasure); I felt that I must continue playing in secret, and I took this shadow to her, when she told me her own experience, which convinced us both that we were very like each other inside. She had discovered that work is the best fun after all, and I learned it in time, but have my lapses, and so had she.

I know what was her favourite costume when she was at the age that they make heroines of: it was a

pale blue with a pale blue bonnet, the white ribbons of which tied aggravatingly beneath the chin, and when questioned about this garb she never admitted that she looked pretty in it, but she did say, with blushes too, that blue was her colour, and then she might smile, as at some memory, and begin to tell us about a man who—but it ended there with another smile which was longer in departing. She never said, indeed she denied strenuously, that she had led the men a dance, but again the smile returned, and came between us and full belief. Yes, she had her little vanities; when she got the Mizpah ring she did carry that finger in such a way that the most reluctant must see. She was very particular about her gloves, and hid her boots so that no other should put them on, and then she forgot their hiding-place, and had suspicions of the one who found them. A good way of enraging her was to say that her last year's bonnet would do for this year without alteration, or that it would defy the face of clay to count the number of her shawls. In one of my books there is a mother who is setting off with her son for the town to which he had been called as minister, and she pauses on the threshold to ask him anxiously if he thinks her bonnet "sets" her. A reviewer said she acted thus, not because she cared how she looked, but for the sake of her son. This, I remember, amused my mother very much.

I have seen many weary on-dings of snow, but the one I seem to recollect best occurred nearly twenty years before I was born. It was at the time of my mother's marriage to one who proved a most loving as he was always a well-loved husband, a man I am very proud to be able to call my father. I know not for how many days the snow had been falling, but a day came when the people lost heart and would make no more gullies through it, and by next morning to do so was impossible, they could not fling the snow high enough. Its back was against every door when Sunday came, and none ventured out save a valiant few, who buffeted their way into my mother's home to discuss her predicament, for unless she was "cried" in the church that day she might not be married for another week, and how could she be cried with the minister a field away and the church buried to the waist? For hours they talked, and at last some men started for the church, which was several hundred yards distant. Three of them found a window, and forcing a passage through it, cried the pair, and that is how it came about that my father and mother were married on the first of March.

That would be the end, I suppose, if it were a story, but to my mother it was only another beginning, and not the last. I see her bending over the cradle of her first-born, college for him already in her eye (and my father not less ambitious), and anon

it is a girl who is in the cradle, and then another girl —already a tragic figure to those who know the end. I wonder if any instinct told my mother that the great day of her life was when she bore this child; what I am sure of is that from the first the child followed her with the most wistful eyes and saw how she needed help and longed to rise and give it. For of physical strength my mother had never very much; it was her spirit that got through the work, and in those days she was often so ill that the sand rained on the doctor's window, and men ran to and fro with leeches, and "she is in life, we can say no more" was the information for those who came knocking at the door. "I am sorrow to say," her father writes in an old letter now before me, "that Margaret is in a state that she was never so bad before in this world. Till Wednesday night she was in as poor a condition as you could think of to be alive. However, after bleeding, leeching, etc., the Dr. says this morning that he is better hoped now, but at present we can say no more but only she is alive and in the hands of Him in whose hands all our lives are. I can give you no adequate view of what my feelings are, indeed they are a burden too heavy for me and I cannot describe them. I look on my right and left hand and find no comfort, and if it were not for the rock that is higher than I my spirit would utterly fail, but blessed be His name who can comfort those

that are cast down. O for more faith in His supporting grace in this hour of trial."

Then she is "on the mend," she may "thole thro' " if they take great care of her, "which we will be forward to do." The fourth child dies when but a few weeks old, and the next at two years. She was her grandfather's companion, and thus he wrote of her death, this stern, self-educated Auld Licht with the chapped hands:

"I hope you received my last in which I spoke of Dear little Lydia being unwell. Now with deep sorrow I must tell you that yesterday I assisted in laying her dear remains in the lonely grave. She died at 7 o'clock on Wednesday evening, I suppose by the time you had got the letter. The Dr. did not think it was croup till late on Tuesday night, and all that Medical aid could prescribe was done, but the Dr. had no hope after he saw that the croup was confirmed, and hard indeed would the heart have been that would not have melted at seeing what the dear little creature suffered all Wednesday until the feeble frame was quite worn out. She was quite sensible till within 2 hours of her death, and then she sunk quite low till the vital spark fled, and all medicine that she got she took with the greatest readiness, as if apprehensive they would make her well. I cannot well describe my feelings on the occasion. I thought that the fountain head of my tears had now

been dried up, but I have been mistaken, for I must confess that the briny rivulets descended fast on my furrowed cheeks, she was such a winning Child, and had such a regard for me and always came and told me all her little things, and as she was now speaking, some of her little prattle was very taking, and the lively images of these things intrude themselves more into my mind than they should do, but there is allowance for moderate grief on such occasions. But when I am telling you of my own grief and sorrow, I know not what to say of the bereaved Mother, she hath not met with anything in this world before that hath gone so near the quick with her. She had no handling of the last one as she was not able at the time, for she only had her once in her arms, and her affections had not time to be so fairly entwined around her. I am much afraid that she will not soon if ever get over this trial. Although she was weakly before, yet she was pretty well recovered, but this hath not only affected her mind but her body is so much affected that she is not well able to sit so long as her bed is making and hath scarcely tasted meat [i. e. food] since Monday night, and till some time is elapsed we cannot say how she may be. There is none that is not a parent themselves that can fully sympathise with one in such a state. David is much affected also, but it is not so well known on him, and the younger branches of the family are affected but

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it will be only momentary. But alas in all this vast ado, there is only the sorrow of the world which worketh death, O how gladdening would it be if we were in as great bitterness for sin as for the loss of a first-born. O how unfitted persons or families is for trials who knows not the divine art of casting all their cares upon the Lord, and what multitudes are there that when earthly comforts is taken away, may well say what have I more? all their delight is placed in some one thing or another in the world, and who can blame them for unwillingly parting with what they esteem their chief good. O that we were wise to lay up treasure for the time of need, for it is truly a solemn affair to enter the lists with the king of terrors. It is strange that the living lay the things so little to heart until they have to engage in that war where there is no discharge. O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for my own and others' stupidity in this great matter. O for grace to do every day work in its proper time and to live above the tempting cheating train of earthly things. The rest of the family are moderately well. I have been for some days worse than I have been for 8 months past, but I may soon get better, I am in the same way I have often been in before, but there is no security for it always being so, for I know that it cannot be far from the time when I will be one of those that once were.

I have no other news to send you, and as little heart for them. I hope you will take the earliest opportunity of writing that you can, and be particular as regards Margaret, for she requires consolation."

He died exactly a week after writing this letter, but my mother was to live for another forty-four years. And joys of a kind never shared in by him were to come to her so abundantly, so long drawn out, that, strange as it would have seemed to him to know it, her fuller life had scarce yet begun. And with the joys were to come their sweet, frightened comrades, pain and grief, again she was to be touched to the quick, again and again to be so ill that "she is in life, we can say no more," but still she had attendants very "forward" to help her, some of them unborn in her father's time.

She told me everything, and so my memories of our little red town are coloured by her memories. I knew it as it had been for generations, and suddenly I saw it change, and the transformation could not fail to strike a boy, for these first years are the most impressionable (nothing that happens after we are twelve matters very much); they are also the most vivid years when we look back, and more vivid the farther we have to look, until, at the end, what lies between bends like a hoop, and the extremes meet. But though the new town is to me a glass through which I look at the old, the people I see passing up

and down these wynds, sitting, night-capped, on their barrow-shafts, hobbling in their blacks to church on Sunday, are less those I saw in my childhood than their fathers and mothers who did these things in the same way when my mother was young. I cannot picture the place without seeing her, as a little girl, come to the door of a certain house and beat her bass against the gav'le-end, or there is a wedding to-night, and the carriage with the white-eared horse is sent for a maiden in pale blue, whose bonnet-strings tie beneath the chin.

CHAPTER III

WHAT I SHOULD BE

My mother was a great reader, and with ten minutes to spare before the starch was ready would begin the "Decline and Fall" —and finish it, too, that winter. Foreign words in the text annoyed her and made her bemoan her want of a classical education—she had only attended a Dame's school during some easy months—but she never passed the foreign words by until their meaning was explained to her, and when next she and they met it was as acquaintances, which I think was clever of her. One of her delights was to learn from me scraps of Horace, and then bring them into her conversation with "colleged men." I have come upon her in lonely places, such as the stair-head of the east room, muttering these quotations aloud to herself, and I well remember how she would say to the visitors, "Ay, ay, it's very true, Doctor, but as you know, 'Eheu fugaces, Postume, Postume, labuntur anni,' " or "Sal, Mr. so and so, my lassie is thriving well, but would it no be more to the point to say 'O mater, pulchra filia pulchrior'?" which astounded

them very much if she managed to reach the end without being flung, but usually she had a fit of laughing in the middle, and so they found her out.

Biography and exploration were her favourite reading, for choice the biography of men who had been good to their mothers, and she liked the explorers to be alive so that she could shudder at the thought of their venturing forth again, but though she expressed a hope that they would have the sense to stay at home henceforth, she gleamed with admiration when they disappointed her. In later days I had a friend who was an African explorer, and she was in two minds about him; he was one of the most engrossing of mortals to her, she admired him prodigiously, pictured him at the head of his caravan, now attacked by savages, now by wild beasts, and adored him for the uneasy hours he gave her, but she was also afraid that he wanted to take me with him, and then she thought he should be put down by law. Explorers' mothers also interested her very much; the books might tell her nothing about them, but she could create them for herself and wring her hands in sympathy with them when they had got no news of him for six months. Yet there were times when she grudged him to them—as the day when he returned victorious. Then what was before her eyes was not the son coming marching home again, but an old woman peering for him round the window curtain

and trying not to look uplifted. The newspaper reports would be about the son, but my mother's comment was "She's a proud woman this night."

We read many books together when I was a boy, "Robinson Crusoe" being the first (and the second), and the "Arabian Nights" should have been the next, for we got it out of the library (a penny for three days), but on discovering that they were nights when we had paid for knights we sent that volume packing, and I have curled my lips at it ever since. "The Pilgrim's Progress" we had in the house (it was as common a possession as a dresser-head), and so enamoured of it was I that I turned our garden into sloughs of Despond, with pea-sticks to represent Christian on his travels and a buffet-stool for his burden, but when I dragged my mother out to see my handiwork she was scared, and I felt for days, with a certain elation, that I had been a dark character. Besides reading every book we could hire or borrow I also bought one now and again, and while buying (it was the occupation of weeks) I read, standing at the counter, most of the other books in the shop, which is perhaps the most exquisite way of reading. And I took in a magazine called "Sunshine," the most delicious periodical, I am sure, of any day. It cost a halfpenny or a penny a month, and always, as I fondly remember, had a continued tale about the dearest girl, who sold water-cress,

which is a dainty not grown and I suppose never seen in my native town. This romantic little creature took such hold of my imagination that I cannot eat watercress even now without emotion. I lay in bed wondering what she would be up to in the next number; I have lost trout because when they nibbled my mind was wandering with her; my early life was embittered by her not arriving regularly on the first of the month. I know not whether it was owing to her loitering on the way one month to an extent flesh and blood could not bear, or because we had exhausted the penny library, but on a day I conceived a glorious idea, or it was put into my head by my mother, then desirous of making progress with her new clouty hearth-rug. The notion was nothing short of this, why should I not write the tales myself? I did write them—in the garret—but they by no means helped her to get on with her work, for when I finished a chapter I bounded downstairs to read it to her, and so short were the chapters, so ready was the pen, that I was back with new manuscript before another clout had been added to the rug. Authorship seemed, like her bannock-baking, to consist of running between two points. They were all tales of adventure (happiest is he who writes of adventure), no characters were allowed within if I knew their like in the flesh, the scene lay in unknown parts, desert islands, enchanted gardens, with

knights (none of your nights) on black chargers, and round the first corner a lady selling water-cress.

At twelve or thereabout I put the literary calling to bed for a time, having gone to a school where cricket and football were more esteemed, but during the year before I went to the university, it woke up and I wrote great part of a three-volume novel. The publisher replied that the sum for which he would print it was a hundred and—however, that was not the important point (I had sixpence): where he stabbed us both was in writing that he considered me a "clever lady." I replied stiffly that I was a gentleman, and since then I have kept that manuscript concealed. I looked through it lately, and, oh, but it is dull. I defy any one to read it.

The malignancy of publishers, however, could not turn me back. From the day on which I first tasted blood in the garret my mind was made up; there could be no hum-dreadful-drum profession for me; literature was my game. It was not highly thought of by those who wished me well. I remember being asked by two maiden ladies, about the time I left the university, what I was to be, and when I replied brazenly, "An author," they flung up their hands, and one exclaimed reproachfully, "And you an M. A.!" My mother's views at first were not dissimilar; for long she took mine jestingly as something I would grow out of, and afterwards they hurt her so that I

tried to give them up. To be a minister—that she thought was among the fairest prospects, but she was a very ambitious woman, and sometimes she would add, half scared at her appetite, that there were ministers who had become professors, "but it was not canny to think of such things."

I had one person only on my side, an old tailor, one of the fullest men I have known, and quite the best talker. He was a bachelor (he told me all that is to be known about woman), a lean man, pallid of face, his legs drawn up when he walked, as if he was ever carrying something in his lap; his walks were of the shortest, from the tea-pot on the hob to the board on which he stitched, from the board to the hob, and so to bed. He might have gone out had the idea struck him, but in the years I knew him, the last of his brave life, I think he was only in the open twice, when he "flitted"—changed his room for another hard by. I did not see him make these journeys, but I seem to see him now, and he is somewhat dizzy in the odd atmosphere; in one hand he carries a box-iron, he raises the other, wondering what this is on his head—it is a hat; a faint smell of singed cloth goes by with him. This man had heard of my set of photographs of the poets and asked for a sight of them, which led to our first meeting. I remember how he spread them out on his board, and after looking long at them, turned his gaze on me and said solemnly,

> What can I do to be for ever known,
> And make the age to come my own?

These lines of Cowley were new to me, but the sentiment was not new, and I marvelled how the old tailor could see through me so well. So it was strange to me to discover presently that he had not been thinking of me at all, but of his own young days, when that couplet sang in his head, and he, too, had thirsted to set off for Grub Street, but was afraid, and while he hesitated old age came, and then Death, and found him grasping a box-iron.

I hurried home with the mouthful, but neighbours had dropped in, and this was for her ears only, so I drew her to the stair, and said imperiously,

> What can I do to be for ever known,
> And make the age to come my own?

It was an odd request for which to draw her from a tea-table, and she must have been surprised, but I think she did not laugh, and in after years she would repeat the lines fondly, with a flush on her soft face. "That is the kind you would like to be yourself!" we would say in jest to her, and she would reply almost passionately, "No, but I would be windy of being his mother." It is possible that she could have been his mother had that other son lived, he might have managed it from sheer love of her, but for my part I can smile at one of those two figures on the stair now,

having long given up the dream of being for ever known, and seeing myself more akin to my friend, the tailor; for as he was found at the end on his board, so I hope shall I be found at my hand-loom, doing honestly the work that suits me best. Who shall know so well as I that it is but a hand-loom compared to the great guns that reverberate through the age to come? But she who stood with me on the stair that day was a very simple woman, accustomed all her life to making the most of small things, and I weaved sufficiently well to please her, which has been my only steadfast ambition since I was a little boy.

Not less than mine became her desire that I should have my way—but, ah, the iron seats in that Park of horrible repute, and that bare room at the top of many flights of stairs! While I was away at college she drained all available libraries for books about those who go to London to live by the pen, and they all told the same shuddering tale. London, which she never saw, was to her a monster that licked up country youths as they stepped from the train; there were the garrets in which they sat abject, and the park seats where they passed the night. Those park seats were the monster's glaring eyes to her, and as I go by them now she is nearer to me than when I am in any other part of London. I daresay that when night comes, this Hyde Park which is so gay by day

is haunted by the ghosts of many mothers, who run, wild-eyed, from seat to seat, looking for their sons.

But if we could dodge those dreary seats she longed to see me try my luck, and I sought to exclude them from the picture by drawing maps of London with Hyde Park left out. London was as strange to me as to her, but long before I was shot upon it I knew it by maps, and drew them more accurately than I could draw them now. Many a time she and I took our jaunt together through the map, and were most gleeful, popping into telegraph offices to wire my father and sister that we should not be home till late, winking to my books in lordly shop-windows, lunching at restaurants (and remembering not to call it dinner), saying, "How do?" to Mr. Alfred Tennyson when we passed him in Regent Street, calling at publishers' offices for a cheque, when "Will you take care of it, or shall I?" I asked gaily, and she would be certain to reply, "I'm thinking we'd better take it to the bank and get the money," for she always felt surer of money than of cheques, so to the bank we went ("Two tens, and the rest in gold"), and thence straightway (by cab) to the place where you buy sealskin coats for middling old ladies. But ere the laugh was done the park would come through the map like a blot.

"If you could only be sure of as much as would keep body and soul together," my mother would say with a sigh.

"With something over, mother, to send to you."

"You couldna expect that at the start."

The wench I should have been courting now was journalism, that grisette of literature who has a smile and a hand for all beginners, welcoming them at the threshold, teaching them so much that is worth knowing, introducing them to the other lady whom they have worshipped from afar, showing them even how to woo her, and then bidding them a bright God-speed—he were an ingrate who, having had her joyous companionship, no longer flings her a kiss as they pass. But though she bears no ill-will when she is jilted, you must serve faithfully while you are hers, and you must seek her out and make much of her, and, until you can rely on her good-nature (note this), not a word about the other lady. When at last she took me in I grew so fond of her that I called her by the other's name, and even now I think at times that there was more fun in the little sister, but I began by wooing her with contributions that were all misfits. In an old book I find columns of notes about works projected at this time, nearly all to consist of essays on deeply uninteresting subjects; the lightest was to be a volume on the older satirists, beginning with Skelton and Tom Nash—the half of that manuscript still lies in a dusty chest—the only story was about Mary Queen of Scots, who was also the subject of many unwritten papers. Queen Mary

seems to have been luring me to my undoing ever since I saw Holyrood, and I have a horrid fear that I may write that novel yet. That anything could be written about my native place never struck me. We had read somewhere that a novelist is better equipped than most of his trade if he knows himself and one woman, and my mother said, "You know yourself, for everybody must know himself" (there never was a woman who knew less about herself than she), and she would add dolefully, "But I doubt I'm the only woman you know well."

"Then I must make you my heroine," I said lightly.

"A gey auld-farrant-like heroine!" she said, and we both laughed at the notion—so little did we read the future.

Thus it is obvious what were my qualifications when I was rashly engaged as a leader-writer (it was my sister who saw the advertisement) on an English provincial paper. At the moment I was as uplifted as the others, for the chance had come at last, with what we all regarded as a prodigious salary, but I was wanted in the beginning of the week, and it suddenly struck me that the leaders were the one thing I had always skipped. Leaders! How were they written? what were they about? My mother was already sitting triumphant among my socks, and I durst not let her see me quaking. I retired to pon-

der, and presently she came to me with the daily paper. Which were the leaders? she wanted to know, so evidently I could get no help from her. Had she any more newspapers? I asked, and after rummaging she produced a few with which her boxes had been lined. Others, very dusty, came from beneath carpets, and lastly a sooty bundle was dragged down the chimney. Surrounded by these, I sat down and studied how to become a journalist.

CHAPTER IV

AN EDITOR

A devout lady, to whom some friend had presented one of my books, used to say when asked how she was getting on with it, "Sal, it's dreary, weary, uphill work, but I've wrastled through with tougher jobs in my time, and, please God, I'll wrastle through with this one." It was in this spirit, I fear, though she never told me so, that my mother wrestled for the next year or more with my leaders, and indeed I was always genuinely sorry for the people I saw reading them. In my spare hours I was trying journalism of another kind and sending it to London, but nearly eighteen months elapsed before there came to me, as unlooked for as a telegram, the thought that there was something quaint about my native place. A boy who found that a knife had been put into his pocket in the night could not have been more surprised. A few days afterwards I sent my mother a London evening paper with an article entitled "An Auld Licht Community," and they told me that when she saw the heading she laughed, because there was something droll

to her in the sight of the words Auld Licht in print. For her, as for me, that newspaper was soon to have the face of a friend. To this day I never pass its placards in the street without shaking it by the hand, and she used to sew its pages together as lovingly as though they were a child's frock; but let the truth be told, when she read that first article she became alarmed, and fearing the talk of the town, hid the paper from all eyes. For some time afterwards, while I proudly pictured her showing this and similar articles to all who felt an interest in me, she was really concealing them fearfully in a bandbox on the garret stair. And she wanted to know by return of post whether I was paid for these articles just as I was paid for real articles; when she heard that I was paid better, she laughed again and had them out of the bandbox for re-reading, and it cannot be denied that she thought the London editor a fine fellow but slightly soft.

When I sent off that first sketch I thought I had exhausted the subject, but our editor wrote that he would like something more of the same, so I sent him a marriage, and he took it, and then I tried him with a funeral, and he took it, and really it began to look as if we had him. Now my mother might have been discovered, in answer to certain excited letters, flinging the bundle of undarned socks from her lap, and "going in for literature"; she was racking her

brains, by request, for memories I might convert into articles, and they came to me in letters which she dictated to my sisters. How well I could hear her saying between the lines: "But the editor-man will never stand that, it's perfect blethers"—"By this post it must go, I tell you; we must take the editor when he's hungry—we canna be blamed for it, can we? he prints them of his free will, so the wite is his"—"But I'm near terrified.—If London folk reads them we're done for." And I was sounded as to the advisability of sending him a present of a lippie of short-bread, which was to be her crafty way of getting round him. By this time, though my mother and I were hundreds of miles apart, you may picture us waving our hands to each other across country, and shouting "Hurrah!" You may also picture the editor in his office thinking he was behaving like a shrewd man of business, and unconscious that up in the north there was an elderly lady chuckling so much at him that she could scarcely scrape the potatoes.

I was now able to see my mother again, and the park seats no longer loomed so prominent in our map of London. Still, there they were, and it was with an effort that she summoned up courage to let me go. She feared changes, and who could tell that the editor would continue to be kind? Perhaps when he saw me—

She seemed to be very much afraid of his seeing

me, and this, I would point out, was a reflection on my appearance or my manner.

No, what she meant was that I looked so young, and—and that would take him aback, for had I not written as an aged man?

"But he knows my age, mother."

"I'm glad of that, but maybe he wouldna like you when he saw you."

"Oh, it is my manner, then!"

"I dinna say that, but—"

Here my sister would break in: "The short and the long of it is just this, she thinks nobody has such manners as herself. Can you deny it, you vain woman?"

My mother would deny it vigorously.

"You stand there," my sister would say with affected scorn, "and tell me you don't think you could get the better of that man quicker than any of us?"

"Sal, I'm thinking I could manage him," says my mother, with a chuckle.

"How would you set about it?"

Then my mother would begin to laugh. "I would find out first if he had a family, and then I would say they were the finest family in London."

"Yes, that is just what you would do, you cunning woman! But if he has no family?"

"I would say what great men editors are!"

"He would see through you."

"Not he!"

"You don't understand that what imposes on common folk would never hoodwink an editor."

"That's where you are wrong. Gentle or simple, stupid or clever, the men are all alike in the hands of a woman that flatters them."

"Ah, I'm sure there are better ways of getting round an editor than that."

"I daresay there are," my mother would say with conviction, "but if you try that plan you will never need to try another."

"How artful you are, mother—you with your soft face! Do you not think shame?"

"Pooh!" says my mother brazenly.

"I can see the reason why you are so popular with men."

"Ay, you can see it, but they never will."

"Well, how would you dress yourself if you were going to that editor's office?"

"Of course I would wear my silk and my Sabbath bonnet."

"It is you who are shortsighted now, mother. I tell you, you would manage him better if you just put on your old grey shawl and one of your bonny white mutches, and went in half smiling and half timid and said, 'I am the mother of him that writes about the Auld Lichts, and I want you to promise that he will never have to sleep in the open air.' "

But my mother would shake her head at this, and reply almost hotly, "I tell you if I ever go into that man's office, I go in silk."

I wrote and asked the editor if I should come to London, and he said No, so I went, laden with charges from my mother to walk in the middle of the street (they jump out on you as you are turning a corner), never to venture forth after sunset, and always to lock up everything (I who could never lock up anything, except my heart in company). Thanks to this editor, for the others would have nothing to say to me though I battered on all their doors, she was soon able to sleep at nights without the dread that I should be waking presently with the iron-work of certain seats figured on my person, and what relieved her very much was that I had begun to write as if Auld Lichts were not the only people I knew of. So long as I confined myself to them she had a haunting fear that, even though the editor remained blind to his best interests, something would one day go crack within me (as the mainspring of a watch breaks) and my pen refuse to write for evermore. "Ay, I like the article brawly," she would say timidly, "but I'm doubting it's the last—I always have a sort of terror the new one may be the last," and if many days elapsed before the arrival of another article her face would say mournfully, "The blow has fallen—he can think of nothing more to

write about." If I ever shared her fears I never told her so, and the articles that were not Scotch grew in number until there were hundreds of them, all carefully preserved by her: they were the only thing in the house that, having served one purpose, she did not convert into something else, yet they could give her uneasy moments. This was because I nearly always assumed a character when I wrote; I must be a country squire, or an undergraduate, or a butler, or a member of the House of Lords, or a dowager, or a lady called Sweet Seventeen, or an engineer in India, else was my pen clogged; and though this gave my mother certain fearful joys, causing her to laugh unexpectedly (so far as my articles were concerned she nearly always laughed in the wrong place), it also scared her. Much to her amusement, the editor continued to prefer the Auld Licht papers, however, as was proved (to those who knew him) by his way of thinking that the others would pass as they were, while he sent these back and asked me to make them better. Here again she came to my aid. I had said that the row of stockings were hung on a string by the fire, which was a recollection of my own, but she could tell me whether they were hung upside down. She became quite skilful at sending or giving me (for now I could be with her half the year) the right details, but still she smiled at the editor, and in her gay moods she would say, "I

was fifteen when I got my first pair of elastic-sided boots. Tell him my charge for this important news is two pounds ten."

"Ay, but though we're doing well, it's no the same as if they were a book with your name on it." So the ambitious woman would say with a sigh, and I did my best to turn the Auld Licht sketches into a book with my name on it. Then perhaps we understood most fully how good a friend our editor had been, for just as I had been able to find no well-known magazine—and I think I tried all—which would print any article or story about the poor of my native land, so now the publishers, Scotch and English, refused to accept the book as a gift. I was willing to present it to them, but they would have it in no guise; there seemed to be a blight on everything that was Scotch. I daresay we sighed, but never were collaborators more prepared for rejection, and though my mother might look wistfully at the scorned manuscript at times and murmur, "You poor cold little crittur shut away in a drawer, are you dead or just sleeping?" she had still her editor to say grace over. And at last publishers, sufficiently daring and far more than sufficiently generous, were found for us by a dear friend, who made one woman very "uplifted." He also was an editor, and had as large a part in making me a writer of books as the other in determining what the books should be about.

Now that I was an author, I must get into a club. But you should have heard my mother on clubs! She knew of none save those to which you subscribe a pittance weekly in anticipation of rainy days, and the London clubs were her scorn. Often I heard her on them—she raised her voice to make me hear, whichever room I might be in, and it was when she was sarcastic that I skulked the most: "Thirty pounds is what he will have to pay the first year, and ten pounds a year after that. You think it's a lot o' siller? Oh, no, you're mista'en—it's nothing ava. For the third part of thirty pounds you could rent a four-roomed house, but what is a four-roomed house, what is thirty pounds, compared to the glory of being a member of a club! Where does the glory come in? Sal, you needna ask me, I'm just a doited auld stock that never set foot in a club, so it's little I ken about glory. But I may tell you if you bide in London and canna become member of a club, the best you can do is to tie a rope round your neck and slip out of the world. What use are they? Oh, they're terrible useful. You see, it doesna do for a man in London to eat his dinner in his lodgings. Other men shake their heads at him. He maun away to his club if he is to be respected. Does he get good dinners at the club? Oh, they cow! You get no common beef at clubs; there is a manzy of different things all sauced up to be unlike themsels. Even

the potatoes daurna look like potatoes. If the food in a club looks like what it is, the members run about flinging up their hands and crying, 'Woe is me!' Then this is another thing, you get your letters sent to the club instead of to your lodgings. You see, you would get them sooner at your lodgings, and you may have to trudge weary miles to the club for them; but that's a great advantage, and cheap at thirty pounds, is it no? I wonder they can do it at the price."

My wisest policy was to remain downstairs when these withering blasts were blowing, but probably I went up in self-defence.

"I never saw you so pugnacious before, mother."

"Oh," she would reply promptly, "you canna expect me to be sharp in the uptake when I am no a member of a club."

"But the difficulty is in becoming a member. They are very particular about whom they elect, and I daresay I shall not get in."

"Well, I'm but a poor crittur (not being member of a club), but I think I can tell you to make your mind easy on that head. You'll get in, I'se uphaud —and your thirty pounds will get in, too."

"If I get in, it will be because the editor is supporting me."

"It's the first ill thing I ever heard of him."

"You don't think he is to get any of the thirty pounds, do you?"

" 'Deed if I did I should be better pleased, for he has been a good friend to us; but what maddens me is that every penny of it should go to those bare-faced scoundrels."

"What bare-faced scoundrels?"

"Them that have the club."

"But all the members have the club between them."

"Havers! I'm no to be catched with chaff."

"But don't you believe me?"

"I believe they've filled your head with their stories till you swallow whatever they tell you. If the place belongs to the members, why do they have to pay thirty pounds?"

"To keep it going."

"They dinna have to pay for their dinners, then?"

"Oh, yes, they have to pay extra for dinner."

"And a gey black price, I'm thinking."

"Well, five or six shillings."

"Is that all? Losh, it's nothing. I wonder they dinna raise the price."

Nevertheless my mother was of a sex that scorned prejudice, and, dropping sarcasm, she would at times cross-examine me as if her mind was not yet made up. "Tell me this, if you were to fall ill, would you be paid a weekly allowance out of the club?"

No, it was not that kind of club.

"I see. Well, I am just trying to find out what

kind of club it is. Do you get anything out of it for accidents?"

Not a penny.

"Anything at New Year's time?"

Not so much as a goose.

"Is there any one mortal thing you get free out of that club?"

There was not one mortal thing.

"And thirty pounds is what you pay for this?"

If the committee elected me.

"How many are in the committee?"

About a dozen, I thought.

"A dozen! Ay, ay, that makes two pound ten apiece."

When I was elected I thought it wisdom to send my sister upstairs with the news. My mother was ironing, and made no comment, unless with the iron, which I could hear rattling more violently in its box. Presently I heard her laughing—at me undoubtedly, but she had recovered control over her face before she came downstairs to congratulate me sarcastically. This was grand news, she said without a twinkle, and I must write and thank the committee, the noble critturs. I saw behind her mask, and maintained a dignified silence, but she would have another shot at me. "And tell them," she said from the door, "you were doubtful of being elected, but your auld mother had aye a mighty confidence they would

snick you in." I heard her laughing softly as she went up the stair, but though I had provided her with a joke I knew she was burning to tell the committee what she thought of them.

Money, you see, meant so much to her, though even at her poorest she was the most cheerful giver. In the old days, when the article arrived, she did not read it at once, she first counted the lines to discover what we should get for it—she and the daughter who was so dear to her had calculated the payment per line, and I remember once overhearing a discussion between them about whether that sub-title meant another sixpence. Yes, she knew the value of money; she had always in the end got the things she wanted, but now she could get them more easily, and it turned her simple life into a fairy tale. So often in those days she went down suddenly upon her knees; we would come upon her thus, and go away noiselessly. After her death I found that she had preserved in a little box, with a photograph of me as a child, the envelopes which had contained my first cheques. There was a little ribbon round them.

CHAPTER V

A DAY OF HER LIFE

I SHOULD like to call back a day of her life as it was at this time, when her spirit was as bright as ever and her hand as eager, but she was no longer able to do much work. It should not be difficult, for she repeated herself from day to day, and yet did it with a quaint unreasonableness that was ever yielding fresh delight. Our love for her was such that we could easily tell what she would do in given circumstances, but she had always a new way of doing it.

Well, with break of day she wakes and sits up in bed and is standing in the middle of the room. So nimble was she in the mornings (one of our troubles with her) that these three actions must be considered as one; she is on the floor before you have time to count them. She has strict orders not to rise until her fire is lit, and having broken them there is a demure elation on her face. The question is what to do before she is caught and hurried to bed again. Her fingers are tingling to prepare the breakfast; she would dearly love to black-lead the grate, but that

might rouse her daughter from whose side she has slipped so cunningly. She catches sight of the screen at the foot of the bed, and immediately her soft face becomes very determined. To guard her from draughts the screen had been brought here from the lordly east room, where it was of no use whatever. But in her opinion it was too beautiful for use; it belonged to the east room, where she could take pleasant peeps at it; she had objected to its removal, even become low-spirited. Now is her opportunity. The screen is an unwieldy thing, but still as a mouse she carries it, and they are well under way when it strikes against the gas-bracket in the passage. Next moment a reproachful hand arrests her. She is challenged with being out of bed, she denies it—standing in the passage. Meekly or stubbornly she returns to bed, and it is no satisfaction to you that you can say, "Well, well, of all the women!" and so on, or "Surely you knew that the screen was brought here to protect you," for she will reply scornfully, "Who was touching the screen?"

By this time I have awakened (I am through the wall) and join them anxiously: so often has my mother been taken ill in the night that the slightest sound from her room rouses the house. She is in bed again, looking as if she had never been out of it, but I know her and listen sternly to the tale of her misdoings. She is not contrite. Yes, maybe she did

promise not to venture forth on the cold floors of daybreak, but she had risen for a moment only, and we just t'neaded her with our talk about draughts —there were no such things as draughts in her young days—and it is more than she can do (here she again attempts to rise, but we hold her down) to lie there and watch that beautiful screen being spoilt. I reply that the beauty of the screen has ever been its miserable defect: ho, there! for a knife with which to spoil its beauty and make the bedroom its fitting home. As there is no knife handy, my foot will do; I raise my foot, and then—she sees that it is bare, she cries to me excitedly to go back to bed lest I catch cold. For though, ever careless of herself, she will wander the house unshod, and tell us not to talk havers when we chide her, the sight of one of us similarly negligent rouses her anxiety at once. She is willing now to sign any vow if only I will take my bare feet back to bed, but probably she is soon after me in hers to make sure that I am nicely covered up.

It is scarcely six o'clock, and we have all promised to sleep for another hour, but in ten minutes she is sure that eight has struck (house disgraced), or that if it has not, something is wrong with the clock. Next moment she is captured on her way downstairs to wind up the clock. So evidently we must be up and doing, and as we have no servant, my sister disappears into the kitchen, having first asked me to

see that "that woman" lies still, and "that woman" calls out that she always does lie still, so what are we blethering about?

She is up now, and dressed in her thick maroon wrapper; over her shoulders (lest she should stray despite our watchfulness) is a shawl, not placed there by her own hands, and on her head a delicious mutch. O, that I could sing the pæan of the white mutch (and the dirge of the elaborate black cap) from the day when she called witchcraft to her aid and made it out of snow-flakes, and the dear worn hands that washed it tenderly in a basin, and the starching of it, and the finger-iron for its exquisite frills that looked like curls of sugar, and the sweet bands with which it tied beneath the chin! The honoured snowy mutch, how I love to see it smiling to me from the doors and windows of the poor; it is always smiling—sometimes maybe a wavering, wistful smile, as if a tear-drop lay hidden among the frills. A hundred times I have taken the characterless cap from my mother's head and put the mutch in its place and tied the bands beneath her chin, while she protested but was well pleased. For in her heart she knew what suited her best, and would admit it, beaming, when I put a mirror into her hands and told her to look; but nevertheless the cap cost no less than so and so, whereas— Was that a knock at the door? She is gone, to put on her cap!

She begins the day by the fireside with the New Testament in her hands, an old volume with its loose pages beautifully refixed, and its covers sewn and resewn by her, so that you would say it can never fall to pieces. It is mine now, and to me the black threads with which she stitched it are as part of the contents. Other books she read in the ordinary manner, but this one differently, her lips moving with each word as if she were reading aloud, and her face very solemn. The Testament lies open on her lap long after she has ceased to read, and the expression of her face has not changed.

I have seen her reading other books early in the day, but never without a guilty look on her face, for she thought reading was scarce respectable until night had come. She spends the forenoon in what she calls doing nothing, which may consist in stitching so hard that you would swear she was an overworked seamstress at it for her life, or you will find her on a table with nails in her mouth, and anon she has to be chased from the garret (she has suddenly decided to change her curtains), or she is under the bed searching for bandboxes and asking sternly where we have put that bonnet. On the whole, she is behaving in a most exemplary way to-day (not once have we caught her trying to go out into the washing-house), and we compliment her at dinner-time, partly because she deserves it, and partly to

make her think herself so good that she will eat something, just to maintain her new character. I question whether one hour of all her life was given to thoughts of food; in her great days to eat seemed to her to be waste of time, and afterwards she only ate to boast of it, as something she had done to please us. She seldom remembered whether she had dined, but always presumed she had, and while she was telling me in all good faith what the meal consisted of, it might be brought in. When in London I had to hear daily what she was eating, and perhaps she had refused all dishes until they produced the pen and ink. These were flourished before her, and then she would say with a sigh, "Tell him I am to eat an egg." But they were not so easily deceived; they waited, pen in hand, until the egg was eaten.

She never "went for a walk" in her life. Many long trudges she had as a girl when she carried her father's dinner in a flaggon to the country place where he was at work, but to walk with no end save the good of your health seemed a very droll proceeding to her. In her young days, she was positive, no one had ever gone for a walk, and she never lost the belief that it was an absurdity introduced by a new generation with too much time on their hands. That they enjoyed it she could not believe; it was merely a form of showing off, and as they passed her window she would remark to herself with blasting sat-

ire, "Ay, Jeames, are you off for your walk?" and add fervently, "Rather you than me!" I was one of those who walked, and though she smiled, and might drop a sarcastic word when she saw me putting on my boots, it was she who had heated them in preparation for my going. The arrangement between us was that she should lie down until my return, and to ensure its being carried out I saw her in bed before I started; but with the bang of the door she would be at the window to watch me go: there is one spot on the road where a thousand times I have turned to wave my stick to her, while she nodded and smiled and kissed her hand to me. That kissing of the hand was the one English custom she had learned.

In an hour or so I return, and perhaps find her in bed, according to promise, but still I am suspicious. The way to her detection is circuitous.

"I'll need to be rising now," she says, with a yawn that may be genuine.

"How long have you been in bed?"

"You saw me go."

"And then I saw you at the window. Did you go straight back to bed?"

"Surely I had that much sense."

"The truth!"

"I might have taken a look at the clock first."

"It is a terrible thing to have a mother who pre-

varicates. Have you been lying down ever since I left?"

"Thereabout."

"What does that mean exactly?"

"Off and on."

"Have you been to the garret?"

"What should I do in the garret?"

"But have you?"

"I might just have looked up the garret stair."

"You have been redding up the garret again!"

"Not what you could call a redd up."

"O, woman, woman, I believe you have not been in bed at all!"

"You see me in it."

"My opinion is that you jumped into bed when you heard me open the door."

"Havers."

"Did you?"

"No."

"Well, then, when you heard me at the gate?"

"It might have been when I heard you at the gate."

As daylight goes she follows it with her sewing to the window, and gets another needleful out of it, as one may run after a departed visitor for a last word; but now the gas is lit, and no longer is it shameful to sit down to literature. If the book be a story by George Eliot or Mrs. Oliphant, her favourite (and mine) among women novelists, or if it be a Carlyle,

and we move softly, she will read, entranced, for hours. Her delight in Carlyle was so well known that various good people would send her books that contained a page about him; she could place her finger on any passage wanted in the biography as promptly as though she were looking for some article in her own drawer, and given a date she was often able to tell you what they were doing in Cheyne Row that day. Carlyle, she decided, was not so much an ill man to live with as one who needed a deal of managing; but when I asked if she thought she could have managed him she only replied with a modest smile that meant "Oh, no!" but had the face of "Sal, I would have liked to try."

One lady lent her some scores of Carlyle letters that have never been published, and crabbed was the writing; but though my mother liked to have our letters read aloud to her, she read every one of these herself, and would quote from them in her talk. Side by side with the Carlyle letters, which show him in his most gracious light, were many from his wife to a friend, and in one of these a romantic adventure is described—I quote from memory, and it is a poor memory compared to my mother's, which registered everything by a method of her own: "What might be the age of Bell Tibbits? Well, she was born the week I bought the boiler, so she'll be one-and-fifty (no less!) come Martinmas." Mrs. Carlyle had got

into the train at a London station and was feeling very lonely, for the journey to Scotland lay before her and no one had come to see her off. Then, just as the train was starting, a man jumped into the carriage: to her regret until she saw his face, when, behold, they were old friends, and the last time they met (I forget how many years before) he had asked her to be his wife. He was very nice, and, if I remember aright, saw her to her journey's end, though he had intended to alight at some half-way place. I call this an adventure, and I am sure it seemed to my mother to be the most touching and memorable adventure that can come into a woman's life. "You see he hadna forgot," she would say proudly, as if this was a compliment in which all her sex could share, and on her old tender face shone some of the elation with which Mrs. Carlyle wrote that letter.

But there were times, she held, when Carlyle must have made his wife a glorious woman. "As when?" I might inquire.

"When she keeked in at his study door and said to herself, 'The whole world is ringing with his fame, and he is my man!' "

"And then," I might point out, "he would roar to her to shut the door."

"Pooh," said my mother, "a man's roar is neither here nor there." But her verdict as a whole was, "I would rather have been his mother than his wife."

So we have got her into her chair with the Carlyles, and all is well. Furthermore, "to mak siccar," my father has taken the opposite side of the fireplace and is deep in the latest five columns of Gladstone, who is his Carlyle. He is to see that she does not slip away fired by a conviction, which suddenly over-rides her pages, that the kitchen is going to rack and ruin for want of her, and she is to recall him to himself should he put his foot in the fire and keep it there, forgetful of all save his hero's eloquence. (We were a family who needed a deal of watching.) She is not interested in what Mr. Gladstone has to say; indeed she could never be brought to look upon politics as of serious concern for grown folk (a class in which she scarcely included man), and she gratefully gave up reading "leaders" the day I ceased to write them. But like want of reasonableness, a love for having the last word, want of humour and the like, politics were in her opinion a mannish attribute to be tolerated, and Gladstone was the name of the something which makes all our sex such queer characters. She had a profound faith in him as an aid to conversation, and if there were silent men in the company would give him to them to talk about, precisely as she divided a cake among children. And then, with a motherly smile, she would leave them to gorge on him. But in the idolising of Gladstone she recognised, nevertheless, a certain in-

evitability, and would no more have tried to contend with it than to sweep a shadow off the floor. Gladstone was, and there was an end of it in her practical philosophy. Nor did she accept him coldly; like a true woman she sympathised with those who suffered severely, and they knew it and took counsel of her in the hour of need. I remember one ardent Gladstonian who, as a general election drew near, was in sore straits indeed, for he disbelieved in Home Rule, and yet how could he vote against "Gladstone's man"? His distress was so real that it gave him a hang-dog appearance. He put his case gloomily before her, and until the day of the election she riddled him with sarcasm; I think he only went to her because he found a mournful enjoyment in seeing a false Gladstonian tortured.

It was all such plain sailing for him, she pointed out; he did not like this Home Rule, and therefore he must vote against it.

She put it pitiful clear, he replied with a groan.

But she was like another woman to him when he appeared before her on his way to the polling-booth.

"This is a watery Sabbath to you, I'm thinking," she said sympathetically, but without dropping her wires—for, Home Rule or no Home Rule, that stocking-foot must be turned before twelve o'clock.

A watery Sabbath means a doleful day, and "A watery Sabbath it is," he replied with feeling. A si-

lence followed, broken only by the click of the wires. Now and again he would mutter, "Ay, well, I'll be going to vote—little did I think the day would come," and so on; but if he rose it was only to sit down again, and at last she crossed over to him and said softly (no sarcasm in her voice now), "Away with you, and vote for Gladstone's man!" He jumped up and made off without a word, but from the east window we watched him strutting down the brae. I laughed, but she said, "I'm no sure that it's a laughing matter," and afterwards, "I would have liked fine to be that Gladstone's mother."

It is nine o'clock now, a quarter past nine, half-past nine—all the same moment to me, for I am at a sentence that will not write. I know, though I can't hear, what my sister has gone upstairs to say to my mother:

"I was in at him at nine, and he said, 'In five minutes,' so I put the steak on the brander, but I've been in thrice since then, and every time he says, 'In five minutes,' and when I try to take the table-cover off, he presses his elbows hard on it, and growls. His supper will be completely spoilt."

"Oh, that weary writing!"

"I can do no more, mother, so you must come down and stop him."

"I have no power over him," my mother says, but she rises smiling, and presently she is opening my door.

"In five minutes!" I cry, but when I see that it is she I rise and put my arm round her. "What a full basket!" she says, looking at the waste-paper basket which contains most of my work of the night, and with a dear gesture she lifts up a torn page and kisses it. "Poor thing," she says to it, "and you would have liked so fine to be printed!" and she puts her hand over my desk to prevent my writing more.

"In the last five minutes," I begin, "one can often do more than in the first hour."

"Many a time I've said it in my young days," she says slowly.

"And proved it, too!" cries a voice from the door, the voice of one who was prouder of her even than I; it is true, and yet almost unbelievable, that any one could have been prouder of her than I.

"But those days are gone," my mother says solemnly, "gone to come back no more. You'll put by your work now, man, and have your supper, and then you'll come up and sit beside your mother for a whiley, for soon you'll be putting her away in the kirk-yard."

I hear such a little cry from near the door.

So my mother and I go up the stair together. "We have changed places," she says; "that was just how I used to help you up, but I'm the bairn now."

She brings out the Testament again; it was always lying within reach; it is the lock of hair she left me

when she died. And when she has read for a long time she "gives me a look," as we say in the north, and I go out, to leave her alone with God. She had been but a child when her mother died, and so she fell early into the way of saying her prayers with no earthly listener. Often and often I have found her on her knees, but I always went softly away, closing the door. I never heard her pray, but I know very well how she prayed, and that, when that door was shut, there was not a day in God's sight between the worn woman and the little child.

CHAPTER VI

HER MAID OF ALL WORK

And sometimes I was her maid of all work.

It is early morn, and my mother has come noiselessly into my room. I know it is she, though my eyes are shut, and I am only half awake. Perhaps I was dreaming of her, for I accept her presence without surprise, as if in the awakening I had but seen her go out at one door to come in at another. But she is speaking to herself.

"I'm sweer to waken him—I doubt he was working late—oh, that weary writing—no, I maunna waken him."

I start up. She is wringing her hands. "What is wrong?" I cry, but I know before she answers. My sister is down with one of the headaches against which even she cannot fight, and my mother, who bears physical pain as if it were a comrade, is most woe-begone when her daughter is the sufferer. "And she winna let me go down the stair to make a cup of tea for her," she groans.

"I will soon make the tea, mother."

"Will you?" she says eagerly. It is what she has

come to me for, but "It is a pity to rouse you," she says.

"And I will take charge of the house to-day, and light the fires and wash the dishes—"

"Na, oh, no; no, I couldna ask that of you, and you an author."

"It won't be the first time, mother, since I was an author."

"More like the fiftieth!" she says almost gleefully, so I have begun well, for to keep up her spirits is the great thing to-day.

Knock at the door. It is the baker. I take in the bread, looking so sternly at him that he dare not smile.

Knock at the door. It is the postman. (I hope he did not see that I had the lid of the kettle in my other hand.)

Furious knocking in a remote part. This means that the author is in the coal-cellar.

Anon I carry two breakfasts upstairs in triumph. I enter the bedroom like no mere humdrum son, but after the manner of the Glasgow waiter. I must say more about him. He had been my mother's one waiter, the only man-servant she ever came in contact with, and they had met in a Glasgow hotel which she was eager to see, having heard of the monstrous things, and conceived them to resemble country inns with another twelve bedrooms. I remem-

ber how she beamed—yet tried to look as if it was quite an ordinary experience—when we alighted at the hotel door, but though she said nothing I soon read disappointment in her face. She knew how I was exulting in having her there, so would not say a word to damp me, but I craftily drew it out of her. No, she was very comfortable, and the house was grand beyond speech, but—but—where was he? he had not been very hearty. "He" was the landlord; she had expected him to receive us at the door and ask if we were in good health and how we had left the others, and then she would have asked him if his wife was well and how many children they had, after which we should have all sat down together to dinner. Two chambermaids came into her room and prepared it without a single word to her about her journey or on any other subject, and when they had gone, "They are two haughty misses," said my mother with spirit. But what she most resented was the waiter with his swagger black suit and short quick steps and the "towel" over his arm. Without so much as a "Welcome to Glasgow!" he showed us to our seats, not the smallest acknowledgment of our kindness in giving such munificent orders did we draw from him, he hovered around the table as if it would be unsafe to leave us with his knives and forks (he should have seen her knives and forks), when we spoke to each other he affected not to hear, we

might laugh, but this uppish fellow would not join in, we retired, crushed, and he had the final impudence to open the door for us. But though this hurt my mother at the time, the humour of our experiences filled her on reflection, and in her own house she would describe them with unction, sometimes to those who had been in many hotels, often to others who had been in none, and whoever were her listeners she made them laugh, though not always at the same thing.

So now when I enter the bedroom with the tray, on my arm is that badge of pride, the towel; and I approach with prim steps to inform Madam that breakfast is ready, and she puts on the society manner and addresses me as "Sir," and asks with cruel sarcasm for what purpose (except to boast) I carry the towel, and I say, "Is there anything more I can do for Madam?" and Madam replies that there is one more thing I can do, and that is, eat her breakfast for her. But of this I take no notice, for my object is to fire her with the spirit of the game, so that she eats unwittingly.

Now that I have washed up the breakfast things I should be at my writing, and I am anxious to be at it, as I have an idea in my head, which, if it is of any value, has almost certainly been put there by her. But dare I venture? I know that the house has not been properly set going yet, there are beds to make,

the exterior of the teapot is fair, but suppose some one were to look inside? What a pity I knocked over the flour-barrel! Can I hope that for once my mother will forget to inquire into these matters? Is my sister willing to let disorder reign until to-morrow? I determine to risk it. Perhaps I have been at work for half-an-hour when I hear movements overhead. One or other of them is wondering why the house is so quiet. I rattle the tongs, but even this does not satisfy them, so back into the desk go my papers, and now what you hear is not the scrape of a pen, but the rinsing of pots and pans, or I am making beds, and making them thoroughly, because after I am gone my mother will come (I know her) and look suspiciously beneath the coverlet.

The kitchen is now speckless, not an unwashed platter in sight, unless you look beneath the table. I feel that I have earned time for an hour's writing at last, and at it I go with vigour. One page, two pages, really I am making progress, when—was that a door opening? But I have my mother's light step on the brain, so I "yoke" again, and next moment she is beside me. She has not exactly left her room, she gives me to understand; but suddenly a conviction had come to her that I was writing without a warm mat at my feet. She carries one in her hands. Now that she is here, she remains for a time, and though she is in the armchair by the fire, where she

sits bolt upright (she loved to have cushions on the unused chairs, but detested putting her back against them), and I am bent low over my desk, I know that contentment and pity are struggling for possession of her face: contentment wins when she surveys her room, pity when she looks at me. Every article of furniture, from the chairs that came into the world with me and have worn so much better, though I was new and they were second-hand, to the mantel-border of fashionable design which she sewed in her seventieth year, having picked up the stitch in half a lesson, has its story of fight and attainment for her, hence her satisfaction; but she sighs at sight of her son, dipping and tearing, and chewing the loathly pen.

"Oh, that weary writing!"

In vain do I tell her that writing is as pleasant to me as ever was the prospect of a tremendous day's ironing to her; that (to some, though not to me) new chapters are as easy to turn out as new bannocks. No, she maintains, for one bannock is the marrows of another, while chapters—and then, perhaps, her eyes twinkle, and says she saucily, "But, sal, you may be right, for sometimes your bannocks are as alike as mine!"

Or I may be roused from my writing by her cry that I am making strange faces again. It is my contemptible weakness that if I say a character smiled

vacuously, I must smile vacuously; if he frowns or leers, I frown or leer; if he is a coward or given to contortions, I cringe, or twist my legs until I have to stop writing to undo the knot. I bow with him, eat with him, and gnaw my moustache with him. If the character be a lady with an exquisite laugh, I suddenly terrify you by laughing exquisitely. One reads of the astounding versatility of an actor who is stout and lean on the same evening, but what is he to the novelist who is a dozen persons within the hour? Morally, I fear, we must deteriorate—but this is a subject I may wisely edge away from.

We always spoke to each other in broad Scotch (I think in it still), but now and again she would use a word that was new to me, or I might hear one of her contemporaries use it. Now is my opportunity to angle for its meaning. If I ask, boldly, what was that word she used just now, something like "bilbie" or "silvendy"? she blushes, and says she never said anything so common, or hoots, it is some auld-farrant word about which she can tell me nothing. But if in the course of conversation I remark casually, "Did he find bilbie?" or "Was that quite silvendy?" (though the sense of the question is vague to me) she falls into the trap, and the words explain themselves in her replies. Or maybe to-day she sees whither I am leading her, and such is her sensitiveness that she is quite hurt. The humour goes out of

her face (to find bilbie in some more silvendy spot), and her reproachful eyes—but now I am on the arm of her chair, and we have made it up. Nevertheless, I shall get no more old-world Scotch out of her this forenoon, she weeds her talk determinedly, and it is as great a falling away as when the mutch gives place to the cap.

I am off for my afternoon walk, and she has promised to bar the door behind me and open it to none. When I return,—well, the door is still barred, but she is looking both furtive and elated. I should say that she is burning to tell me something, but cannot tell it without exposing herself. Has she opened the door, and if so, why? I don't ask, but I watch. It is she who is sly now:

"Have you been in the east room since you came in?" she asks with apparent indifference.

"No; why do you ask?"

"Oh, I just thought you might have looked in."

"Is there anything new there?"

"I dinna say there is, but—but just go and see."

"There can't be anything new if you kept the door barred," I say cleverly.

This crushes her for a moment; but her eagerness that I should see is greater than her fear. I set off for the east room, and she follows, affecting humility, but with triumph in her eye. How often those little scenes took place! I was never told of the new pur-

chase, I was lured into its presence, and then she waited timidly for my start of surprise.

"Do you see it?" she says anxiously, and I see it, and hear it, for this time it is a bran-new wicker chair, of the kind that whisper to themselves for the first six months.

"A going-about body was selling them in a cart," my mother begins, and what followed presents itself to my eyes before she can utter another word. Ten minutes at the least did she stand at the door argy-bargying with that man. But it would be cruelty to scold a woman so uplifted.

"Fifteen shillings he wanted," she cries, "but what do you think I beat him down to?"

"Seven and sixpence?"

She clasps her hands with delight. "Four shillings, as I'm a living woman!" she crows: never was a woman fonder of a bargain.

I gaze at the purchase with the amazement expected of me, and the chair itself crinkles and shudders to hear what it went for (or is it merely chuckling at her?). "And the man said it cost himself five shillings," my mother continues exultantly. You would have thought her the hardest person had not a knock on the wall summoned us about this time to my sister's side. Though in bed, she has been listening, and this is what she has to say, in a voice that makes my mother very indignant, "You drive a bar-

gain! I'm thinking ten shillings was nearer what you paid."

"Four shillings to a penny!" says my mother.

"I daresay," says my sister; "but after you paid him the money I heard you in the little bedroom press. What were you doing there?"

My mother winces. "I may have given him a present of an old top-coat," she falters. "He looked ill-happit. But that was after I made the bargain."

"Were there bairns in the cart?"

"There might have been a bit lassie in the cart."

"I thought as much. What did you give her? I heard you in the pantry."

"Four shillings was what I got that chair for," replies my mother firmly. If I don't interfere there will be a coldness between them for at least a minute. "There is blood on your finger," I say to my mother.

"So there is," she says, concealing her hand.

"Blood!" exclaims my sister anxiously, and then with a cry of triumph, "I warrant it's jelly. You gave that lassie one of the jelly-cans!"

The Glasgow waiter brings up tea, and presently my sister is able to rise, and after a sharp fight I am expelled from the kitchen. The last thing I do as maid of all work is to lug upstairs the clothes-basket which has just arrived with the mangling. Now there is delicious linen for my mother to finger; there was always rapture on her face when the clothes-

basket came in; it never failed to make her once more the active genius of the house. I may leave her now with her sheets and collars and napkins and fronts. Indeed, she probably orders me to go. A son is all very well, but suppose he were to tread on that counterpane!

My sister is but and I am ben—I mean she is in the east end and I am in the west—tuts, tuts, let us get at the English of this by striving: she is in the kitchen and I am at my desk in the parlour. I hope I may not be disturbed, for to-night I must make my hero say "Darling," and it needs both privacy and concentration. In a word, let me admit (though I should like to beat about the bush) that I have sat down to a love-chapter. Too long has it been avoided, Albert has called Marion "dear" only as yet (between you and me, these are not their real names), but though the public will probably read the word without blinking, it went off in my hands with a bang. They tell me—the Sassenach tell me —that in time I shall be able without a blush to make Albert say "darling," and even gather her up in his arms, but I begin to doubt it; the moment sees me as shy as ever; I still find it advisable to lock the door, and then—no witness save the dog—I "do" it dourly with my teeth clenched, while the dog retreats into the far corner and moans. The bolder Englishman (I am told) will write a love-chapter and then go

out, quite coolly, to dinner, but such goings on are contrary to the Scotch nature; even the great novelists dared not. Conceive Mr. Stevenson left alone with a hero, a heroine, and a proposal impending (he does not know where to look). Sir Walter in the same circumstances gets out of the room by making his love-scenes take place between the end of one chapter and the beginning of the next, but he could afford to do anything, and the small fry must e'en to their task, moan the dog as he may. So I have yoked to mine when, enter my mother, looking wistful.

"I suppose you are terrible thrang," she says.

"Well, I am rather busy, but—what is it you want me to do?"

"It would be a shame to ask you."

"Still, ask me."

"I am so terrified they may be filed."

"You want me to—"

"If you would just come up, and help me to fold the sheets!"

The sheets are folded and I return to Albert. I lock the door and at last I am bringing my hero forward nicely (my knee in the small of his back), when this startling question is shot by my sister through the keyhole:

"Where did you put the carrot-grater?"

It will all have to be done over again if I let Albert

go for a moment, so, gripping him hard, I shout indignantly that I have not seen the carrot-grater.

"Then what did you grate the carrots on?" asks the voice, and the door-handle is shaken just as I shake Albert.

"On a broken cup," I reply with surprising readiness, and I get to work again, but am less engrossed, for a conviction grows on me that I put the carrot-grater in the drawer of the sewing-machine.

I am wondering whether I should confess or brazen it out, when I hear my sister going hurriedly upstairs. I have a presentiment that she has gone to talk about me, and I basely open my door and listen.

"Just look at that, mother!"

"Is it a dish-cloth?"

"That's what it is now."

"Losh behears! it's one of the new table-napkins."

"That's what it was. He has been polishing the kitchen grate with it!"

(I remember!)

"Woe's me! That is what comes of his not letting me budge from this room. O, it is a watery Sabbath when men take to doing women's work!"

"It defies the face of clay, mother, to fathom what makes him so senseless."

"Oh, it's that weary writing."

"And the worst of it is, he will talk to-morrow as if he had done wonders."

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"That's the way with the whole clanjamfray of them."

"Yes, but as usual you will humour him, mother."

"Oh, well, it pleases him, you see," says my mother, "and we can have our laugh when his door's shut."

"He is most terribly handless."

"He is all that, but, poor soul, he does his best."

CHAPTER VII

R. L. S.

These familiar initials are, I suppose, the best beloved in recent literature, certainly they are the sweetest to me, but there was a time when my mother could not abide them. She said "That Stevenson man" with a sneer, and it was never easy to her to sneer. At thought of him her face would become almost hard, which seems incredible, and she would knit her lips and fold her arms, and reply with a stiff "oh" if you mentioned his aggravating name. In the novels we have a way of writing of our heroine, "she drew herself up haughtily," and when mine draw themselves up haughtily I see my mother thinking of Robert Louis Stevenson. He knew her opinion of him, and would write, "My ears tingled yesterday; I sair doubt she has been miscalling me again." But the more she miscalled him the more he delighted in her, and she was informed of this, and at once said "The scoundrel!" If you would know what was his unpardonable crime, it was this, he wrote better books than mine.

I remember the day she found it out, which was not, however, the day she admitted it. That day,

when I should have been at my work, she came upon me in the kitchen, "The Master of Ballantrae" beside me, but I was not reading: my head lay heavy on the table and to her anxious eyes, I doubt not, I was the picture of woe. "Not writing!" I echoed, no, I was not writing, I saw no use in ever trying to write again. And down, I suppose, went my head once more. She misunderstood, and thought the blow had fallen; I had awakened to the discovery, always dreaded by her, that I had written myself dry; I was no better than an empty ink-bottle. She wrung her hands, but indignation came to her with my explanation, which was that while R. L. S. was at it we others were only 'prentices cutting our fingers on his tools. "I could never thole his books," said my mother immediately, and indeed vindictively.

"You have not read any of them," I reminded her.

"And never will," said she with spirit.

And I have no doubt that she called him a dark character that very day. For weeks too, if not for months, she adhered to her determination not to read him, though I, having come to my senses and seen that there is a place for the 'prentice, was taking a pleasure, almost malicious, in putting "The Master of Ballantrae" in her way. I would place it on her table so that it said good-morning to her when she rose. She would frown, and, carrying it downstairs,

as if she had it in the tongs, replace it on its bookshelf. I would wrap it up in the cover she had made for the latest Carlyle: she would skin it contemptuously and again bring it down. I would hide her spectacles in it, and lay it on top of the clothes-basket and prop it up invitingly open against her tea-pot. And at last I got her, though I forget by which of many contrivances. What I recall vividly is a key-hole view, to which another member of the family invited me. Then I saw my mother wrapped up in "The Master of Ballantrae" and muttering the music to herself, nodding her head in approval, and taking a stealthy glance at the foot of each page before she began at the top. Nevertheless she had an ear for the door, for when I bounced in she had been too clever for me; there was no book to be seen, only an apron on her lap and she was gazing out at the window. Some such conversation as this followed:

"You have been sitting very quietly, mother."

"I always sit quietly, I never do anything, I'm just a finished stocking."

"Have you been reading?"

"Do I ever read at this time of day?"

"What is that in your lap?"

"Just my apron."

"Is that a book beneath the apron?"

"It might be a book."

"Let me see."

"Go away with you to your work."

But I lifted the apron. "Why, it's 'The Master of Ballantrae!' " I exclaimed, shocked.

"So it is!" said my mother, equally surprised. But I looked sternly at her, and perhaps she blushed.

"Well, what do you think: not nearly equal to mine?" said I with humour.

"Nothing like them," she said determinedly.

"Not a bit," said I, though whether with a smile or a groan is immaterial; they would have meant the same thing. Should I put the book back on its shelf? I asked, and she replied that I could put it wherever I liked, for all she cared, so long as I took it out of her sight (the implication was that it had stolen on to her lap while she was looking out at the window). My behaviour may seem small, but I gave her a last chance, for I said that some people found it a book there was no putting down until they reached the last page.

"I'm no that kind," replied my mother.

Nevertheless our old game with the haver of a thing, as she called it, was continued, with this difference, that it was now she who carried the book covertly upstairs, and I who replaced it on the shelf, and several times we caught each other in the act, but not a word said either of us; we were grown self-conscious. Much of the play no doubt I forget, but one incident I remember clearly. She had come

down to sit beside me while I wrote, and sometimes, when I looked up, her eye was not on me, but on the shelf where "The Master of Ballantrae" stood inviting her. Mr. Stevenson's books are not for the shelf, they are for the hand; even when you lay them down, let it be on the table for the next comer. Being the most sociable that man has penned in our time, they feel very lonely up there in a stately row. I think their eye is on you the moment you enter the room, and so you are drawn to look at them, and you take a volume down with the impulse that induces one to unchain the dog. And the result is not dissimilar, for in another moment you two are at play. Is there any other modern writer who gets round you in this way? Well, he had given my mother the look which in the ball-room means, "Ask me for this waltz," and she ettled to do it, but felt that her more dutiful course was to sit out the dance with this other less entertaining partner. I wrote on doggedly, but could hear the whispering.

"Am I to be a wall-flower?" asked James Durie reproachfully. (It must have been leap-year.)

"Speak lower," replied my mother, with an uneasy look at me.

"Pooh!" said James contemptuously, "that kail-runtle!"

"I winna have him miscalled," said my mother frowning.

"I am done with him," said James (wiping his cane with his cambric handkerchief), and his sword clattered deliciously (I cannot think this was accidental), which made my mother sigh. Like the man he was, he followed up his advantage with a comparison that made me dip viciously.

"A prettier sound that," said he, clanking his sword again, "than the clack-clack of your young friend's shuttle."

"Whist!" cried my mother, who had seen me dip.

"Then give me your arm," said James, lowering his voice.

"I dare not," answered my mother. "He's so touchy about you."

"Come, come," he pressed her, "you are certain to do it sooner or later, so why not now?"

"Wait till he has gone for his walk," said my mother; "and, forby that, I'm ower old to dance with you."

"How old are you?" he inquired.

"You're gey an' pert!" cried my mother.

"Are you seventy?"

"Off and on," she admitted.

"Pooh," he said, "a mere girl!"

She replied instantly, "I'm no to be catched with chaff;" but she smiled and rose, as if he had stretched out his hand and got her by the finger-tip.

After that they whispered so low (which they

could do as they were now much nearer each other) that I could catch only one remark. It came from James, and seems to show the tenor of their whisperings, for his words were, "Easily enough, if you slip me beneath your shawl."

That is what she did, and furthermore she left the room guiltily, muttering something about redding up the drawers. I suppose I smiled wanly to myself, or conscience must have been nibbling at my mother, for in less than five minutes she was back, carrying her accomplice openly, and she thrust him with positive viciousness into the place where my Stevenson had lost a tooth (as the writer whom he most resembled would have said). And then like a good mother she took up one of her son's books and read it most determinedly. It had become a touching incident to me, and I remember how we there and then agreed upon a compromise: she was to read the enticing thing just to convince herself of its inferiority.

"The Master of Ballantrae" is not the best. Conceive the glory, which was my mother's, of knowing from a trustworthy source that there are at least three better awaiting you on the same shelf. She did not know Alan Breck yet, and he was as anxious to step down as Mr. Bally himself. John Silver was there, getting into his leg, so that she should not have to wait a moment, and roaring, "I'll lay to that!" when

she told me consolingly that she could not thole pirate stories. Not to know these gentlemen, what is it like? It is like never having been in love. But they are in the house! That is like knowing that you will fall in love to-morrow morning. With one word, by drawing one mournful face, I could have got my mother to abjure the jam-shelf—nay, I might have managed it by merely saying that she had enjoyed "The Master of Ballantrae." For you must remember that she only read it to persuade herself (and me) of its unworthiness, and that the reason she wanted to read the others was to get further proof. All this she made plain to me, eyeing me a little anxiously the while, and of course I accepted the explanation. Alan is the biggest child of them all, and I doubt not that she thought so, but curiously enough her views of him are among the things I have forgotten. But how enamoured she was of "Treasure Island," and how faithful she tried to be to me all the time she was reading it! I had to put my hands over her eyes to let her know that I had entered the room, and even then she might try to read between my fingers, coming to herself presently, however, to say "It's a haver of a book."

"Those pirate stories are so uninteresting," I would reply without fear, for she was too engrossed to see through me. "Do you think you will finish this one?"

"I may as well go on with it since I have begun it," my mother says, so slily that my sister and I shake our heads at each other to imply, "Was there ever such a woman!"

"There are none of those one-legged scoundrels in my books," I say.

"Better without them," she replies promptly.

"I wonder, mother, what it is about the man that so infatuates the public?"

"He takes no hold of me," she insists. "I would a hantle rather read your books."

I offer obligingly to bring one of them to her, and now she looks at me suspiciously. "You surely believe I like yours best," she says with instant anxiety, and I soothe her by assurances, and retire advising her to read on, just to see if she can find out how he misleads the public. "Oh, I may take a look at it again by and by," she says indifferently, but nevertheless the probability is that as the door shuts the book opens, as if by some mechanical contrivance. I remember how she read "Treasure Island," holding it close to the ribs of the fire (because she could not spare a moment to rise and light the gas), and how, when bed-time came, and we coaxed, remonstrated, scolded, she said quite fiercely, clinging to the book, "I dinna lay my head on a pillow this night till I see how that laddie got out of the barrel."

After this, I think, he was as bewitching as the

laddie in the barrel to her—Was he not always a laddie in the barrel himself, climbing in for apples while we all stood around, like gamins, waiting for a bite? He was the spirit of boyhood tugging at the skirts of this old world of ours and compelling it to come back and play. And I suppose my mother felt this, as so many have felt it: like others, she was a little scared at first to find herself skipping again, with this masterful child at the rope, but soon she gave him her hand and set off with him for the meadow, not an apology between the two of them for the author left behind. But never to the end did she admit (in words) that he had a way with him which was beyond her son. "Silk and sacking, that is what we are," she was informed, to which she would reply obstinately, "Well, then, I prefer sacking."

"But if he had been your son?"

"But he is not."

"You wish he were?"

"I dinna deny but what I could have found room for him."

And still at times she would smear him with the name of black (to his delight when he learned the reason). That was when some podgy red-sealed blue-crossed letter arrived from Vailima, inviting me to journey thither. (His directions were, "You take the boat at San Francisco, and then my place is the

second to the left.") Even London seemed to her to carry me so far away that I often took a week to the journey (the first six days in getting her used to the idea), and these letters terrified her. It was not the finger of Jim Hawkins she now saw beckoning me across the seas, it was John Silver, waving a crutch. Seldom, I believe, did I read straight through one of these Vailima letters; when in the middle I suddenly remembered who was upstairs and what she was probably doing, and I ran to her, three steps at a jump, to find her, lips pursed, hands folded, a picture of gloom.

"I have a letter from—"

"So I have heard."

"Would you like to hear it?"

"No."

"Can you not abide him?"

"I canna thole him."

"Is he a black?"

"He is all that."

Well, Vailima was the one spot on earth I had any great craving to visit, but I think she always knew I would never leave her. Sometime, she said, she should like me to go, but not until she was laid away. "And how small I have grown this last winter. Look at my wrists. It canna be long now." No, I never thought of going, was never absent for a day from her without reluctance, and never walked so quickly

as when I was going back. In the meantime that happened which put an end for ever to my scheme of travel. I shall never go up the Road of Loving Hearts now, on "a wonderful clear night of stars," to meet the man coming toward me on a horse. It is still a wonderful clear night of stars, but the road is empty. So I never saw the dear king of us all. But before he had written books he was in my part of the country with a fishing wand in his hand, and I like to think that I was the boy who met him that day by Queen Margaret's burn, where the rowans are, and busked a fly for him, and stood watching, while his lithe figure rose and fell as he cast and hinted back from the crystal waters of Noran-side.

CHAPTER VIII

A PANIC IN THE HOUSE

I was sitting at my desk in London when a telegram came announcing that my mother was again dangerously ill, and I seized my hat and hurried to the station. It is not a memory of one night only. A score of times, I am sure, I was called north thus suddenly, and reached our little town trembling, head out at railway-carriage window for a glance at a known face which would answer the question on mine. These illnesses came as regularly as the back-end of the year, but were less regular in going, and through them all, by night and by day, I see my sister moving so unwearyingly, so lovingly, though with failing strength, that I bow my head in reverence for her. She was wearing herself done. The doctor advised us to engage a nurse, but the mere word frightened my mother, and we got between her and the door, as if the woman was already on the stair. To have a strange woman in my mother's room—you who are used to them cannot conceive what it meant to us.

Then we must have a servant. This seemed only less horrible. My father turned up his sleeves and

clutched the besom. I tossed aside my papers, and was ready to run the errands. He answered the door, I kept the fires going, he gave me a lesson in cooking, I showed him how to make beds, one of us wore an apron. It was not for long. I was led to my desk, the newspaper was put into my father's hand. "But a servant!" we cried, and would have fallen to again. "No servant comes into this house," said my sister quite fiercely, and, oh, but my mother was relieved to hear her. There were many such scenes, a year of them, I daresay, before we yielded.

I cannot say which of us felt it most. In London I was used to servants, and in moments of irritation would ring for them furiously, though doubtless my manner changed as they opened the door. I have even held my own with gentlemen in plush, giving one my hat, another my stick, and a third my coat, and all done with little more trouble than I should have expended in putting the three articles on the chair myself. But this bold deed, and other big things of the kind, I did that I might tell my mother of them afterwards, while I sat on the end of her bed, and her face beamed with astonishment and mirth.

From my earliest days I had seen servants. The manse had a servant, the bank had another; one of their uses was to pounce upon, and carry away in stately manner, certain naughty boys who played

with me. The banker did not seem really great to me, but his servant—oh, yes. Her boots cheeped all the way down the church aisle; it was common report that she had flesh every day for her dinner; instead of meeting her lover at the pump, she walked him into the country, and he returned with wild roses in his buttonhole, his hand up to hide them, and on his face the troubled look of those who know that if they take this lady they must give up drinking from the saucer for evermore. For the lovers were really common men until she gave them that glance over the shoulder which, I have noticed, is the fatal gift of servants.

According to legend we once had a servant—in my childhood I could show the mark of it on my forehead, and even point her out to other boys, though she was now merely a wife with a house of her own. But even while I boasted I doubted. Reduced to life-size she may have been but a woman who came in to help. I shall say no more about her lest some one comes forward to prove that she went home at night.

Never shall I forget my first servant. I was eight or nine, in velveteen, diamond socks ("Cross your legs when they look at you," my mother had said, "and put your thumb in your pocket and leave the top of your handkerchief showing"), and I had travelled by rail to visit a relative. He had a servant, and

as I was to be his guest she must be my servant also for the time being—you may be sure I had got my mother to put this plainly before me ere I set off. My relative met me at the station, but I wasted no time in hoping I found him well. I did not even cross my legs for him, so eager was I to hear whether she was still there. A sister greeted me at the door, but I chafed at having to be kissed; at once I made for the kitchen, where, I knew, they reside, and there she was, and I crossed my legs and put one thumb in my pocket, and the handkerchief was showing. Afterwards I stopped strangers on the highway with an offer to show her to them through the kitchen window, and I doubt not the first letter I ever wrote told my mother what they are like when they are so near that you can put your fingers into them.

But now when we could have servants for ourselves I shrank from the thought. It would not be the same house; we should have to dissemble; I saw myself speaking English the long day through. You only know the shell of a Scot until you have entered his home circle; in his office, in clubs, at social gatherings where you and he seem to be getting on so well he is really a house with all the shutters closed and the door locked. He is not opaque of set purpose, often it is against his will—it is certainly against mine, I try to keep my shutters open and my foot in the door, but they will bang to. In many ways my

mother was as reticent as myself, though her manners were as gracious as mine were rough (in vain, alas, all the honest oiling of them), and my sister was the most reserved of us all; you might at times see a light through one of my chinks: she was double-shuttered. Now, it seems to be a law of nature that we must show our true selves at some time, and as the Scot must do it at home, and squeeze a day into an hour, what follows is that there he is self-revealing in the superlative degree, the feelings so long dammed up overflow, and thus a Scotch family are probably better acquainted with each other, and more ignorant of the life outside their circle, than any other family in the world. And as knowledge is sympathy, the affection existing between them is almost painful in its intensity; they have not more to give than their neighbours, but it is bestowed upon a few instead of being distributed among many; they are reputed niggardly, but for family affection at least they pay in gold. In this, I believe, we shall find the true explanation why Scotch literature, since long before the days of Burns, has been so often inspired by the domestic hearth and has treated it with a passionate understanding.

Must a woman come into our house and discover that I was not such a dreary dog as I had the reputation of being? Was I to be seen at last with the veil of dourness lifted? My company voice is so low and

unimpressive that my first remark is merely an intimation that I am about to speak (like the whirr of the clock before it strikes): must it be revealed that I had another voice, that there was one door I never opened without leaving my reserve on the mat? Ah, that room, must its secrets be disclosed? So joyous they were when my mother was well, no wonder we were merry. Again and again she had been given back to us; it was for the glorious to-day we thanked God; in our hearts we knew and in our prayers confessed that the fill of delight had been given us, whatever might befall. We had not to wait till all was over to know its value; my mother used to say, "We never understand how little we need in this world until we know the loss of it," and there can be few truer sayings, but during her last years we exulted daily in the possession of her as much as we can exult in her memory. No wonder, I say, that we were merry, but we liked to show it to God alone, and to Him only our agony during those many night-alarms, when lights flickered in the house and white faces were round my mother's bedside. Not for other eyes those long vigils when, night about, we sat watching, nor the awful nights when we stood together, teeth clenched—waiting—it must be now. And it was not then; her hand became cooler, her breathing more easy; she smiled to us. Once more I could work by snatches, and was glad, but what

was the result to me compared to the joy of hearing that voice from the other room? There lay all the work I was ever proud of, the rest is but honest craftsmanship done to give her coal and food and softer pillows. My thousand letters that she so carefully preserved, always sleeping with the last beneath the sheet, where one was found when she died —they are the only writing of mine of which I shall ever boast. I would not there had been one less though I could have written an immortal book for it.

How my sister toiled—to prevent a stranger's getting any footing in the house! And how, with the same object, my mother strove to "do for herself" once more. She pretended that she was always well now, and concealed her ailments so craftily that we had to probe for them:

"I think you are not feeling well to-day?"

"I am perfectly well."

"Where is the pain?"

"I have no pain to speak of."

"Is it at your heart?"

"No."

"Is your breathing hurting you?"

"Not it."

"Do you feel those stounds in your head again?"

"No, no, I tell you there is nothing the matter with me."

"Have you a pain in your side?"

"Really, it's most provoking I canna put my hand to my side without your thinking I have a pain there."

"You have a pain in your side!"

"I might have a pain in my side."

"And you are trying to hide it! Is it very painful?"

"It's—it's no so bad but what I can bear it."

Which of these two gave in first I cannot tell, though to me fell the duty of persuading them, for whichever she was she rebelled as soon as the other showed signs of yielding, so that sometimes I had two converts in the week, but never both on the same day. I would take them separately, and press the one to yield for the sake of the other, but they saw so easily through my artifice. My mother might go bravely to my sister and say, "I have been thinking it over, and I believe I would like a servant fine—once we got used to her."

"Did he tell you to say that?" asks my sister sharply.

"I say it of my own free will."

"He put you up to it, I am sure, and he told you not to let on that you did it to lighten my work."

"Maybe he did, but I think we should get one."

"Not for my sake," says my sister obstinately, and then my mother comes ben to me to say delightedly, "She winna listen to reason!"

But at last a servant was engaged; we might be said to be at the window, gloomily waiting for her now, and it was with such words as these that we sought to comfort each other and ourselves:

"She will go early to her bed."

"She needna often be seen upstairs."

"We'll set her to the walking every day."

"There will be a many errands for her to run. We'll tell her to take her time over them."

"Three times she shall go to the kirk every Sabbath, and we'll egg her on to attending the lectures in the hall."

"She is sure to have friends in the town. We'll let her visit them often."

"If she dares to come into your room, mother!"

"Mind this, every one of you, servant or no servant, I fold all the linen mysel."

"She shall not get cleaning out the east room."

"Nor putting my chest of drawers in order."

"Nor tidying up my manuscripts."

"I hope she's a reader, though. You could set her down with a book, and then close the door canny on her."

And so on. Was ever servant awaited so apprehensively? And then she came,—at an anxious time, too, when her worth could be put to the proof at once,—and from first to last she was a treasure. I know not what we should have done without her.

CHAPTER IX

MY HEROINE

WHEN it was known that I had begun another story my mother might ask what it was to be about this time.

"Fine we can guess who it is about," my sister would say pointedly.

"Maybe you can guess, but it is beyond me," says my mother, with the meekness of one who knows that she is a dull person.

My sister scorned her at such times. "What woman is in all his books?" she would demand.

"I'm sure I canna say," replies my mother determinedly. "I thought the women were different every time."

"Mother, I wonder you can be so audacious! Fine you know what woman I mean."

"How can I know? What woman is it? You should bear in mind that I hinna your cleverness" (they were constantly giving each other little knocks).

"I won't give you the satisfaction of saying her name. But this I will say, it is high time he was keeping her out of his books."

And then as usual my mother would give herself away unconsciously. "That is what I tell him," she says, chuckling, "and he tries to keep me out, but he canna; it's more than he can do!"

On an evening after my mother had gone to bed, the first chapter would be brought upstairs, and I read, sitting at the foot of the bed, while my sister watched to make my mother behave herself, and my father cried H'sh! when there were interruptions. All would go well at the start, the reflections were accepted with a little nod of the head, the descriptions of scenery as ruts on the road that must be got over at a walking pace (my mother did not care for scenery, and that is why there is so little of it in my books). But now I am reading too quickly, a little apprehensively, because I know that the next paragraph begins with—let us say with, "Along this path came a woman": I had intended to rush on here in a loud bullying voice, but "Along this path came a woman" I read, and stop. Did I hear a faint sound from the other end of the bed? Perhaps I did not; I may only have been listening for it, but I falter and look up. My sister and I look sternly at my mother. She bites her underlip and clutches the bed with both hands, really she is doing her best for me, but first comes a smothered gurgling sound, then her hold on herself relaxes and she shakes with mirth.

"That's a way to behave!" cries my sister.

"I cannot help it," my mother gasps.

"And there's nothing to laugh at."

"It's that woman," my mother explains unnecessarily.

"Maybe she's not the woman you think her," I say, crushed.

"Maybe not," says my mother doubtfully. "What was her name?"

"Her name," I answer with triumph, "was not Margaret;" but this makes her ripple again. "I have so many names nowadays," she mutters.

"H'sh!" says my father, and the reading is resumed.

Perhaps the woman who came along the path was of tall and majestic figure, which should have shown my mother that I had contrived to start my train without her this time. But it did not.

"What are you laughing at now?" says my sister severely. "Do you not hear that she was a tall, majestic woman?"

"It's the first time I ever heard it said of her," replies my mother.

"But she is."

"Ke fy, havers!"

"The book says it."

"There will be a many queer things in the book. What was she wearing?"

I have not described her clothes. "That's a mis-

take," says my mother. "When I come upon a woman in a book, the first thing I want to know about her is whether she was good-looking, and the second, how she was put on."

The woman on the path was eighteen years of age, and of remarkable beauty.

"That settles you," says my sister.

"I was no beauty at eighteen," my mother admits, but here my father interferes unexpectedly. "There wasna your like in this countryside at eighteen," says he stoutly.

"Pooh!" says she, well pleased.

"Were you plain, then?" we ask.

"Sal," she replies briskly, "I was far from plain."

"H'sh!"

Perhaps in the next chapter this lady (or another) appears in a carriage.

"I assure you we're mounting in the world," I hear my mother murmur, but I hurry on without looking up. The lady lives in a house where there are footmen—but the footmen have come on the scene too hurriedly. "This is more than I can stand," gasps my mother, and just as she is getting the better of a fit of laughter, "Footman, give me a drink of water," she cries, and this sets her off again. Often the readings had to end abruptly because her mirth brought on violent fits of coughing.

Sometimes I read to my sister alone, and she as-

sured me that she could not see my mother among the women this time. This she said to humour me. Presently she would slip upstairs to announce triumphantly, "You are in again!"

Or in the small hours I might make a confidant of my father, and when I had finished reading he would say thoughtfully, "That lassie is very natural. Some of the ways you say she had—your mother had them just the same. Did you ever notice what an extraordinary woman your mother is?"

Then would I seek my mother for comfort. She was the more ready to give it because of her profound conviction that if I was found out—that is, if readers discovered how frequently and in how many guises she appeared in my books—the affair would become a public scandal.

"You see Jess is not really you," I begin inquiringly.

"Oh, no, she is another kind of woman altogether," my mother says, and then spoils the compliment by adding naïvely, "She had but two rooms and I have six."

I sigh. "Without counting the pantry, and it's a great big pantry," she mutters.

This was not the sort of difference I could greatly plume myself upon, and honesty would force me to say, "As far as that goes, there was a time when you had but two rooms yourself—"

"That's long since," she breaks in. "I began with an up-the-stair, but I always had it in my mind—I never mentioned it, but there it was—to have the down-the-stair as well. Ay, and I've had it this many a year."

"Still, there is no denying that Jess had the same ambition."

"She had, but to her two-roomed house she had to stick all her born days. Was that like me?"

"No, but she wanted—"

"She wanted, and I wanted, but I got and she didna. That's the difference betwixt her and me."

"If that is all the difference, it is little credit I can claim for having created her."

My mother sees that I need soothing. "That is far from being all the difference," she would say eagerly. "There's my silk, for instance. Though I say it mysel, there's not a better silk in the valley of Strathmore. Had Jess a silk of any kind—not to speak of a silk like that?"

"Well, she had no silk, but you remember how she got that cloak with beads."

"An eleven and a bit! Hoots, what was that to boast of! I tell you, every single yard of my silk cost—"

"Mother, that is the very way Jess spoke about her cloak!"

She lets this pass, perhaps without hearing it, for

solicitude about her silk has hurried her to the wardrobe where it hangs.

"Ah, mother, I am afraid that was very like Jess!"

"How could it be like her when she didna even have a wardrobe? I tell you what, if there had been a real Jess and she had boasted to me about her cloak with beads, I would have said to her in a careless sort of voice, 'Step across with me, Jess, and I'll let you see something that is hanging in my wardrobe.' That would have lowered her pride!"

"I don't believe that is what you would have done, mother."

Then a sweeter expression would come into her face. "No," she would say reflectively, "it's not."

"What would you have done? I think I know."

"You canna know. But I'm thinking I would have called to mind that she was a poor woman, and ailing, and terrible windy about her cloak, and I would just have said it was a beauty and that I wished I had one like it."

"Yes, I am certain that is what you would have done. But oh, mother, that is just how Jess would have acted if some poorer woman than she had shown her a new shawl."

"Maybe, but though I hadna boasted about my silk I would have wanted to do it."

"Just as Jess would have been fidgeting to show off her eleven and a bit!"

It seems advisable to jump to another book; not to my first, because—well, as it was my first, there would naturally be something of my mother in it, and not to the second, as it was my first novel and not much esteemed even in our family. (But the little touches of my mother in it are not so bad.) Let us try the story about the minister.

My mother's first remark is decidedly damping. "Many a time in my young days," she says, "I played about the Auld Licht manse, but I little thought I should live to be the mistress of it!"

"But Margaret is not you."

"N—no, oh no. She had a very different life from mine. I never let on to a soul that she is me!"

"She was not meant to be you when I began. Mother, what a way you have of coming creeping in!"

"You should keep better watch on yourself."

"Perhaps if I had called Margaret by some other name—"

"I should have seen through her just the same. As soon as I heard she was the mother I began to laugh. In some ways, though, she's no so very like me. She was long in finding out about Babbie. I'se uphaud I should have been quicker."

"Babbie, you see, kept close to the garden wall."

"It's not the wall up at the manse that would have hidden her from me."

"She came out in the dark."

"I'm thinking she would have found me looking for her with a candle."

"And Gavin was secretive."

"That would have put me on my mettle."

"She never suspected anything."

"I wonder at her."

But my new heroine is to be a child. What has madam to say to that?

A child! Yes, she has something to say even to that. "This beats all!" are the words.

"Come, come, mother, I see what you are thinking, but I assure you that this time—"

"Of course not," she said soothingly, "oh, no, she canna be me;" but anon her real thoughts are revealed by the artless remark, "I doubt, though, this is a tough job you have on hand—it is so long since I was a bairn."

We came very close to each other in those talks. "It is a queer thing," she would say softly, "that near everything you write is about this bit place. You little expected that when you began. I mind well the time when it never entered your head, any more than mine, that you could write a page about our squares and wynds. I wonder how it has come about?"

There was a time when I could not have answered that question, but that time had long passed. "I suppose, mother, it was because you were most at home

in your own town, and there was never much pleasure to me in writing of people who could not have known you, nor of squares and wynds you never passed through, nor of a countryside where you never carried your father's dinner in a flaggon. There is scarce a house in all my books where I have not seemed to see you a thousand times, bending over the fireplace or winding up the clock."

"And yet you used to be in such a quandary because you knew nobody you could make your women-folk out of! Do you mind that, and how we both laughed at the notion of your having to make them out of me?"

"I remember."

"And now you've gone back to my father's time. It's more than sixty years since I carried his dinner in a flaggon through the long parks of Kinnordy."

"I often go into the long parks, mother, and sit on the stile at the edge of the wood till I fancy I see a little girl coming toward me with a flaggon in her hand."

"Jumping the burn (I was once so proud of my jumps!) and swinging the flaggon round so quick that what was inside hadna time to fall out. I used to wear a magenta frock and a white pinafore. Did I ever tell you that?"

"Mother, the little girl in my story wears a magenta frock and a white pinafore."

"You minded that! But I'm thinking it wasna a lassie in a pinafore you saw in the long parks of Kinnordy, it was just a gey done auld woman."

"It was a lassie in a pinafore, mother, when she was far away, but when she came near it was a gey done auld woman."

"And a fell ugly one!"

"The most beautiful one I shall ever see."

"I wonder to hear you say it. Look at my wrinkled auld face."

"It is the sweetest face in all the world."

"See how the rings drop off my poor wasted finger."

"There will always be some one nigh, mother, to put them on again."

"Ay, will there! Well I know it. Do you mind how when you were but a bairn you used to say, 'Wait till I'm a man, and you'll never have a reason for greeting again?' "

I remembered.

"You used to come running into the house to say, 'There's a proud dame going down the Marywellbrae in a cloak that is black on one side and white on the other; wait till I'm a man, and you'll have one the very same.' And when I lay on gey hard beds you said, 'When I'm a man you'll lie on feathers.' You saw nothing bonny, you never heard of my setting my heart on anything, but what you flung up

your head and cried, 'Wait till I'm a man.' You fair shamed me before the neighbours, and yet I was windy, too. And now it has all come true like a dream. I can call to mind not one little thing I ettled for in my lusty days that hasna been put into my hands in my auld age; I sit here useless, surrounded by the gratification of all my wishes and all my ambitions, and at times I'm near terrified, for it's as if God had mista'en me for some other woman."

"Your hopes and ambitions were so simple," I would say, but she did not like that. "They werena that simple," she would answer, flushing.

I am reluctant to leave those happy days, but the end must be faced, and as I write I seem to see my mother growing smaller and her face more wistful, and still she lingers with us, as if God had said, "Child of mine, your time has come, be not afraid," and she was not afraid, but still she lingered, and He waited, smiling. I never read any of that last book to her; when it was finished she was too heavy with years to follow a story. To me this was as if my book must go out cold into the world (like all that may come after it from me), and my sister, who took more thought for others and less for herself than any other human being I have known, saw this, and by some means unfathomable to a man coaxed my mother into being once again the woman she had been. On a day but three weeks before she died my

father and I were called softly upstairs. My mother was sitting bolt upright, as she loved to sit, in her old chair by the window, with a manuscript in her hands. But she was looking about her without much understanding. "Just to please him," my sister whispered, and then in a low, trembling voice my mother began to read. I looked at my sister. Tears of woe were stealing down her face. Soon the reading became very slow and stopped. After a pause, "There was something you were to say to him," my sister reminded her. "Luck," muttered a voice as from the dead, "luck." And then the old smile came running to her face like a lamp-lighter, and she said to me, "I am ower far gone to read, but I'm thinking I am in it again!" My father put her Testament in her hands, and it fell open—as it always does—at the Fourteenth of John. She made an effort to read, but could not. Suddenly she stooped and kissed the broad page. "Will that do instead?" she asked.

CHAPTER X

ART THOU AFRAID HIS POWER SHALL FAIL?

For years I had been trying to prepare myself for my mother's death, trying to foresee how she would die, seeing myself when she was dead. Even then I knew it was a vain thing I did, but I am sure there was no morbidness in it. I hoped I should be with her at the end, not as the one she looked at last, but as him from whom she would turn only to look upon her best-beloved, not my arm but my sister's should be round her when she died, not my hand but my sister's should close her eyes. I knew that I might reach her too late; I saw myself open a door where there was none to greet me, and go up the old stair into the old room. But what I did not foresee was that which happened. I little thought it could come about that I should climb the old stair, and pass the door beyond which my mother lay dead, and enter another room first, and go on my knees there.

My mother's favourite paraphrase is one known

in our house as David's because it was the last he learned to repeat. It was also the last thing she read—

> Art thou afraid his power shall fail
> When comes thy evil day?
> And can an all-creating arm
> Grow weary or decay?

I heard her voice gain strength as she read it, I saw her timid face take courage, but when came my evil day, then at the dawning, alas for me, I was afraid.

In those last weeks, though we did not know it, my sister was dying on her feet. For many years she had been giving her life, a little bit at a time, for another year, another month, latterly for another day, of her mother, and now she was worn out. "I'll never leave you, mother."—"Fine I know you'll never leave me." I thought that cry so pathetic at the time, but I was not to know its full significance until it was only the echo of a cry. Looking at these two, then, it was to me as if my mother had set out for the new country, and my sister held her back. But I see with a clearer vision now. It is no longer the mother but the daughter who is in front, and she cries, "Mother, you are lingering so long at the end, I have ill waiting for you."

But she knew no more than we how it was to be; if she seemed weary when we met her on the stair,

she was still the brightest, the most active figure in my mother's room; she never complained, save when she had to depart on that walk which separated them for half an hour. How reluctantly she put on her bonnet, how we had to press her to it, and how often, having gone as far as the door, she came back to stand by my mother's side. Sometimes, as we watched from the window, I could not but laugh, and yet with a pain at my heart, to see her hasting doggedly onward, not an eye for right or left, nothing in her head but the return. There was always my father in the house, than whom never was a more devoted husband, and often there were others, one daughter in particular, but they scarce dared tend my mother—this one snatched the cup jealously from their hands. My mother liked it best from her. We all knew this. "I like them fine, but I canna do without you." My sister, so unselfish in all other things, had an unwearying passion for parading it before us. It was the rich reward of her life.

The others spoke among themselves of what must come soon, and they had tears to help them, but this daughter would not speak of it, and her tears were ever slow to come. I knew that night and day she was trying to get ready for a world without her mother in it, but she must remain dumb, none of us was so Scotch as she, she must bear her agony alone—

a tragic, solitary Scotchwoman. Even my mother, who spoke so calmly to us of the coming time, could not mention it to her. These two, the one in bed, and the other bending over her, could only look long at each other, until slowly the tears came to my sister's eyes, and then my mother would turn away her wet face. And still neither said a word, each knew so well what was in the other's thoughts, so eloquently they spoke in silence, "Mother, I am loath to let you go," and "Oh, my daughter, now that my time is near, I wish you werena quite so fond of me." But when the daughter had slipped away my mother would grip my hand and cry, "I leave her to you; you see how she has sown, it will depend on you how she is to reap." And I made promises, but I suppose neither of us saw that she had already reaped.

In the night my mother might waken and sit up in bed, confused by what she saw. While she slept, six decades or more had rolled back and she was again in her girlhood; suddenly recalled from it she was dizzy, as with the rush of the years. How had she come into this room? When she went to bed last night, after preparing her father's supper, there had been a dresser at the window: what had become of the salt-bucket, the meal-tub, the hams that should be hanging from the rafters? There were no rafters; it was a papered ceiling. She had often heard of open beds, but how came she to be lying in one? To

fathom these things she would try to spring out of bed, and be startled to find it a labour, as if she had been taken ill in the night. Hearing her move I might knock on the wall that separated us, this being a sign, prearranged between us, that I was near by, and so all was well, but sometimes the knocking seemed to belong to the past, and she would cry, "That is my father chapping at the door, I maun rise and let him in." She seemed to see him—and it was one much younger than herself that she saw—covered with snow, kicking clods of it from his boots, his hands swollen and chapped with sand and wet. Then I would hear—it was a common experience of the night—my sister soothing her lovingly, and turning up the light to show her where she was, helping her to the window to let her see that it was no night of snow, even humouring her by going downstairs, and opening the outer door, and calling into the darkness, "Is anybody there?" and if that was not sufficient, she would swaddle my mother in wraps and take her through the rooms of the house, lighting them one by one, pointing out familiar objects, and so guiding her slowly through the sixty odd years she had jumped too quickly. And perhaps the end of it was that my mother came to my bedside and said wistfully, "Am I an auld woman?"

But with daylight, even during the last week in which I saw her, she would be up and doing, for

though pititfully frail she no longer suffered from any ailment. She seemed so well comparatively that I, having still the remnants of an illness to shake off, was to take a holiday in Switzerland, and then return for her, when we were all to go to the much-loved manse of her much-loved brother in the west country. So she had many preparations on her mind, and the morning was the time when she had any strength to carry them out. To leave her house had always been a month's work for her, it must be left in such perfect order, every corner visited and cleaned out, every chest probed to the bottom, the linen lifted out, examined and put back lovingly as if to make it lie more easily in her absence, shelves had to be repapered, a strenuous week devoted to the garret. Less exhaustively, but with much of the old exultation in her house, this was done for the last time, and then there was the bringing out of her own clothes, and the spreading of them upon the bed and the pleased fingering of them, and the consultations about which should be left behind. Ah, beautiful dream! I clung to it every morning; I would not look when my sister shook her head at it, but long before each day was done, I too knew that it could never be. It had come true many times, but never again. We two knew it, but when my mother, who must always be prepared so long beforehand, called for her trunk and band-boxes we brought

them to her, and we stood silent, watching, while she packed.

The morning came when I was to go away. It had come a hundred times, when I was a boy, when I was an undergraduate, when I was a man, when she had seemed big and strong to me, when she was grown so little and it was I who put my arms round her. But always it was the same scene. I am not to write about it, of the parting and the turning back on the stair, and two people trying to smile, and the setting off again, and the cry that brought me back. Nor shall I say more of the silent figure in the background, always in the background, always near my mother. The last I saw of these two was from the gate. They were at the window which never passes from my eyes. I could not see my dear sister's face, for she was bending over my mother, pointing me out to her, and telling her to wave her hand and smile, because I liked it so. That action was an epitome of my sister's life.

I had been gone a fortnight when the telegram was put into my hands. I had got a letter from my sister, a few hours before, saying that all was well at home. The telegram said in five words that she had died suddenly the previous night. There was no mention of my mother, and I was three days' journey from home.

The news I got on reaching London was this: my

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mother did not understand that her daughter was dead, and they were waiting for me to tell her.

I need not have been such a coward. This is how these two died—for, after all, I was too late by twelve hours to see my mother alive.

Their last night was almost gleeful. In the old days that hour before my mother's gas was lowered had so often been the happiest that my pen steals back to it again and again as I write: it was the time when my mother lay smiling in bed and we were gathered round her like children at play, our reticence scattered on the floor or tossed in sport from hand to hand, the author become so boisterous that in the pauses they were holding him in check by force. Rather woful had been some attempts latterly to renew those evenings, when my mother might be brought to the verge of them, as if some familiar echo called her, but where she was she did not clearly know, because the past was roaring in her ears like a great sea. But this night was the last gift to my sister. The joyousness of their voices drew the others in the house upstairs, where for more than an hour my mother was the centre of a merry party and so clear of mental eye that they, who were at first cautious, abandoned themselves to the sport, and whatever they said, by way of humourous rally, she instantly capped as of old, turning their darts against

themselves until in self-defence they were three to one, and the three hard pressed. How my sister must have been rejoicing! Once again she could cry, "Was there ever such a woman!" They tell me that such a happiness was on the daughter's face that my mother commented on it, that having risen to go they sat down again, fascinated by the radiance of these two. And when eventually they went, the last words they heard were, "They are gone, you see, mother, but I am here, I will never leave you," and "Na, you winna leave me; fine I know that." For some time afterwards their voices could be heard from downstairs, but what they talked of is not known. And then came silence. Had I been at home I should have been in the room again several times, turning the handle of the door softly, releasing it so that it did not creak, and standing looking at them. It had been so a thousand times. But that night, would I have slipped out again, mind at rest, or should I have seen the change coming while they slept?

Let it be told in the fewest words. My sister awoke next morning with a headache. She had always been a martyr to headaches, but this one, like many another, seemed to be unusually severe. Nevertheless she rose and lit my mother's fire and brought up her breakfast, and then had to return to bed. She was not able to write her daily letter to me, saying

how my mother was, and almost the last thing she did was to ask my father to write it, and not to let on that she was ill, as it would distress me. The doctor was called, but she rapidly became unconscious. In this state she was removed from my mother's bed to another. It was discovered that she was suffering from an internal disease. No one had guessed it. She herself never knew. Nothing could be done. In this unconsciousness she passed away, without knowing that she was leaving her mother. Had I known, when I heard of her death, that she had been saved that pain, surely I could have gone home more bravely with the words,

> Art thou afraid his power shall fail
> When comes thy evil day?

Ah, you would think so, I should have thought so, but I know myself now. When I reached London I did hear how my sister died, but still I was afraid. I saw myself in my mother's room telling her why the door of the next room was locked, and I was afraid. God had done so much, and yet I could not look confidently to Him for the little that was left to do. "O ye of little faith!" These are the words I seem to hear my mother saying to me now, and she looks at me so sorrowfully.

He did it very easily, and it has ceased to seem marvellous to me because it was so plainly His do-

ing. My timid mother saw the one who was never to leave her carried unconscious from the room, and she did not break down. She who used to wring her hands if her daughter was gone for a moment never asked for her again, they were afraid to mention her name; an awe fell upon them. But I am sure they need not have been so anxious. There are mysteries in life and death, but this was not one of them. A child can understand what happened. God said that my sister must come first, but He put His hand on my mother's eyes at that moment and she was altered.

They told her that I was on my way home, and she said with a confident smile, "He will come as quick as trains can bring him." That is my reward, that is what I have got for my books. Everything I could do for her in this life I have done since I was a boy; I look back through the years and I cannot see the smallest thing left undone.

They were buried together on my mother's seventy-sixth birthday, though there had been three days between their deaths. On the last day, my mother insisted on rising from bed and going through the house. The arms that had so often helped her on that journey were now cold in death, but there were others only less loving, and she went slowly from room to room like one bidding good-bye, and in mine she said, "The beautiful rows upon rows of books, and he said every one of them was mine, all

mine!" and in the east room, which was her greatest triumph, she said caressingly, "My nain bonny room!" All this time there seemed to be something that she wanted, but the one was dead who always knew what she wanted, and they produced many things at which she shook her head. They did not know then that she was dying, but they followed her through the house in some apprehension, and after she returned to bed they saw that she was becoming very weak. Once she said eagerly, "Is that you, David?" and again she thought she heard her father knocking the snow off his boots. Her desire for that which she could not name came back to her, and at last they saw that what she wanted was the old christening robe. It was brought to her, and she unfolded it with trembling, exultant hands, and when she had made sure that it was still of virgin fairness her old arms went round it adoringly, and upon her face there was the ineffable mysterious glow of motherhood. Suddenly she said, "Wha's bairn's dead? is a bairn of mine dead?" but those watching dared not speak, and then slowly as if with an effort of memory she repeated our names aloud in the order in which we were born. Only one, who should have come third among the ten, did she omit, the one in the next room, but at the end, after a pause, she said her name and repeated it again and again and again, lingering over it as if it were the most exquisite

music and this her dying song. And yet it was a very commonplace name.

They knew now that she was dying. She told them to fold up the christening robe and almost sharply she watched them put it away, and then for some time she talked of the long lovely life that had been hers, and of Him to whom she owed it. She said good-bye to them all, and at last turned her face to the side where her best-beloved had lain, and for over an hour she prayed. They only caught the words now and again, and the last they heard were "God" and "love." I think God was smiling when He took her to Him, as He had so often smiled at her during those seventy-six years.

I saw her lying dead, and her face was beautiful and serene. But it was the other room I entered first, and it was by my sister's side that I fell upon my knees. The rounded completeness of a woman's life that was my mother's had not been for her. She would not have it at the price. "I'll never leave you, mother."—"Fine I know you'll never leave me." The fierce joy of loving too much, it is a terrible thing. My sister's mouth was firmly closed, as if she had got her way.

And now I am left without them, but I trust my memory will ever go back to those happy days, not to rush through them, but dallying here and there, even as my mother wanders through my books. And

if I also live to a time when age must dim my mind and the past comes sweeping back like the shades of night over the bare road of the present, it will not, I believe, be my youth I shall see but hers, not a boy clinging to his mother's skirt and crying, "Wait till I'm a man, and you'll lie on feathers," but a little girl in a magenta frock and a white pinafore, who comes toward me through the long parks, singing to herself, and carrying her father's dinner in a flaggon.

GEORGE MEREDITH

GEORGE MEREDITH

BOX HILL, MAY 22, 1909

All morning there had been a little gathering of people outside the gate. It was the day on which Mr. Meredith was to be, as they say, buried. He had been, as they say, cremated. The funeral coach came, and a very small thing was placed in it and covered with flowers. One plant of the wall-flower in the garden would have covered it. The coach, followed by a few others, took the road to Dorking, where, in familiar phrase, the funeral was to be, and in a moment or two all seemed silent and deserted, the cottage, the garden, and Box Hill.

The cottage was not deserted, as They knew who now trooped into the round in front of it, their eyes on the closed door. They were the mighty company, his children, Lucy and Clara and Rhoda and Diana and Rose and old Mel and Roy Richmond and Adrian and Sir Willoughby and a hundred others, and they stood in line against the box-wood, waiting for him to come out. Each of his proud women carried a flower, and the hands of all his men were ready for the salute.

In the room on the right, in an armchair which had been his home for years—to many the throne of letters in this country—sat an old man, like one forgotten in an empty house. When the last sound of the coaches had passed away he moved in his chair. He wore gray clothes and a red tie, and his face was rarely beautiful, but the hair was white and the limbs were feeble, and the wonderful eyes dimmed, and he was hard of hearing. He moved in his chair, for something was happening to him, and it was this, old age was falling from him. This is what is meant by Death to such as he, and the company awaiting knew. His eyes became again those of the eagle, and his hair was brown, and the lustiness of youth was in his frame, but still he wore the red tie. He rose, and not a moment did he remain within the house, for "golden lie the meadows, golden run the streams," and "the fields and the waters shout to him golden shouts." He flung open the door, as They knew he would do who were awaiting him, and he stood there looking at them, a general reviewing his troops. They wore the pretty clothing in which he had loved to drape them; they were not sad like the mourners who had gone, but happy as the forget-me-nots and pansies at their feet and the lilac overhead, for they knew that this was his coronation day. Only one was airily in mourning, as knowing better than the others what fitted the occasion, the Countess de

Saldar. He recognized her sense of the fitness of things with a smile and a bow. The men saluted, the women gave their flowers to Dahlia to give to him, so that she, being the most unhappy and therefore by him the most beloved, should have his last word, and he took their offerings and passed on. They did not go with him, these, his splendid progeny, the ladies of the future, they went their ways to tell the whole earth of the new world for women which he had been the first to foresee.

Without knowing why, for his work was done, he turned to the left, passing his famous cherry-blossom, and climbed between apple-trees to a little house of two rooms, whence most of that noble company had sprung. It is the Chalet, where he worked, and good and brave men will for ever bow proudly before it, but good and brave women will bow more proudly still. He went there only because he had gone so often, and this time the door was locked; he did not know why nor care. He came swinging down the path, singing lustily, and calling to his dogs, his dogs of the present and the past; and they yelped with joy, for they knew they were once again to breast the hill with him.

He strode up the hill whirling his staff, for which he had no longer any other use. His hearing was again so acute that from far away on the Dorking road he could hear the rumbling of a coach. It had

been disputed whether he should be buried in Westminster Abbey or in a quiet churchyard, and there came to him somehow a knowledge (it was the last he ever knew of little things) that people had been at variance as to whether a casket of dust should be laid away in one hole or in another, and he flung back his head with the old glorious action, and laughed a laugh "broad as a thousand beeves at pasture."

Box Hill was no longer deserted. When a great man dies—and this was one of the greatest since Shakespeare—the immortals await him at the top of the nearest hill. He looked up and saw his peers. They were all young, like himself. He waved the staff in greeting. One, a mere stripling, "slight unspeakably," R.L.S., detached himself from the others, crying gloriously, "Here's the fellow I have been telling you about!" and ran down the hill to be the first to take his Master's hand. In the meanwhile an empty coach was rolling on to Dorking.

NEIL AND TINTINNABULUM

AN INTERLUDE FOR PARENTS

NEIL AND TINTINNABULUM

AN INTERLUDE FOR PARENTS

I. EARLY DAYS

In writing a story a safe plan must be to imitate your favourite author. Until he was nine, when he abandoned the calling, Neil was my favourite author, and I therefore decide to follow his method of dividing the story into short chapters so as to make it look longer.

When he was nine I took him to his preparatory, he prancing in the glories of the unknown until the hour came for me to go, "the hour between the dog and the wolf," and then he was afraid. I said that in the holidays all would be just as it had been before, but the newly-wise one shook his head; and on my return home, when I wandered out unmanned to look at his tool-shed, I found these smashing words in his writing pinned to the door:

THIS ESTABLISHMENT IS NOW PERMANENTLY CLOSED.

I went white as I saw that Neil already understood life better than I did.

Soon again he was on the wing. Here is interesting autobiographical matter I culled years later from the fly-leaf of his *Cæsar:* "Aetat 12, height 4 ft. 11, biceps 8¼, kicks the beam at 6–2."

The reference is to a great occasion when Neil stripped at his preparatory (clandestinely) for a Belt with the word "Bruiser" on it. I am reluctant to boast about him (this is untrue), yet must mention that he won the belt, with which (such are the ups and downs of life) he was that same evening gently belted by his preceptor.

It is but fair to Neil to add that he cut a glittering figure in those circles: captain of the footer, and twenty-six against Juddy's.

"And even then," his telegram to me said, "I was only bowled off my pads."

A rural cricket match in buttercup time with boys at play, seen and heard through the trees; it is surely the loveliest scene in England and the most disarming sound. From the ranks of the unseen dead, for ever passing along our country lanes on their eternal journey, the Englishman falls out for a moment to look over the gate of the cricket field and smile. Let Neil's 26 against Juddy's, the first and perhaps the only time he is to meet the stars on equal terms, be our last sight of him as a child. He is walking back bat in hand to the pavilion, an old railway carriage. An unearthly glory has swept over the cricket

ground. He tries to look unaware of it; you know the expression and the bursting heart. Our smiling Englishman who cannot open the gate waits to make sure that this boy raises his cap in the one right way (without quite touching it, you remember), and then rejoins his comrades. Neil gathers up the glory and tacks it over his bed. "The End," as he used to say in his letters.

I never know him quite so well again. He seems henceforth to be running to me on a road that is moving still more rapidly in the opposite direction.

2. THE FIRST HALF

The scene has changed. Stilled is the crow of Neil, for he is now but one of the lowliest at a great public school, where he reverberates but little. The scug Neil fearfully running errands for his fag-master is another melancholy reminder of the brevity of human greatness.

Lately a Colossus he was now infinitely less than nothing. What shook him was not the bump as he fell, but the general indifference to his having fallen. He lay there like a bird in the grass winded by a blunt-headed arrow, and was cold to his own touch. The Bruiser Belt and his score against Juddy's had accompanied him to school on their own legs, one might say, so confident were they of a welcome from

his mantelshelf, but after an hour he hid them beneath the carpet. Hidden by him all over that once alluring room, as in disgrace, were many other sweet trifles that went to the making of the flame that had been Neil; his laugh was secreted, say in the drawer of his desk; his pranks were stuffed into his hatbox, his fell ambitions were folded away between two pairs of trousers, and now and then a tear would mix with the soapy water as he washed his cheerless face.

In that dreadful month or more I am dug up by his needs and come again into prominence, gloating because he calls for me, sometimes unable to do more than stand afar off on the playing field, so that he may at least see me nigh though we cannot touch. The thrill of being the one needed, which I had never thought to know again. I have leant over a bridge, and enviously watching the gaiety of two attractive boys, now broken to the ways of school, have wished he was one of them, till I heard their language and wondered whether this was part of the necessary cost.

Leaden-footed Neil in the groves that were to become so joyous to him. He had to refashion himself on a harsher model, and he set his teeth and won, blaming me a little for not having broken to him the ugly world we can make it. One by one his hidden parts peeped out from their holes and ran to

him, once more to make his wings; stronger wings than of yore, though some drops of dew had to be shaken off.

By that time my visits were being suffered rather than acclaimed. It was done with an exquisite politeness certainly, but before I was out of sight he had dived into some hilarious rumpus. Gladly for his sake I knew my place.

His first distinct success was as a gargler.

"You remember how I used to hate gargling at home," says an early letter, "and you forced me to do it. Jolly good thing you did force me." His first "jolly" at that school. At once I began to count them.

"Everyone has to gargle just now," he continues, "and we all do it at the same time, and it must sound awfully rum to people passing along the street. We generally gargle a song, and there was a competition in 'Home, sweet Home' among the scugs at m' tutor's, and the judge said I gargled it longest."

Soon afterwards he had the exultation of being recognised as an entity by one of the masters.

"I was walking with Dolman mi.," his letter says, "and we met a new beak called Tiverley and he pretended to fence with me and said 'Whose incomparable little noodle are you?' " This, apparently, was all that happened, but Neil adds with obvious elation, "It was awfully decent of him." (Hail to thee, Tiverley, may "a house" anon be thy portion

for heartening a new boy in the dwindling belief that he exists.)

Dolman mi. evidently had no run on this occasion, but he is older and more famous than Neil (which makes the thing the more flattering). It is a school whither many royal scions are sent, and when camera men go down to photograph the new one, Dolman mi. usually takes his place. He has already been presented to newspaper readers as the heir to three thrones. Of course it is the older boys who select, scrape and colour him (if necessary) for this purpose, but they must see something in him that the smaller boys don't see.

Neil's next step was almost a bound forward; he got a tanning from the head of the house. This also he took in the proper spirit, boasting indeed of the vigour with which Beverley had laid on. (Thee, also, Beverley, I salute, as the Immensity who raised Neil from the ranks of the lowly, the untanned.)

Quite the amiable, sensible little schoolboy, readers may be saying, but that Neil was amiable or sensible I indignantly deny. He was merely waiting; that shapely but enquiring nose of his was only considering how best to strike once more for leadership. So when the time came he was ready; and he has been striking ever since, indeed, there is nothing that I think he so much resembles as a clock that has got out of hand.

All the other small boys in his house had the same opportunity, but they missed it. It was provided by some learned man (name already tossed to oblivion) who delivered unto them a lecture entitled *Help One Another*. The others behaved in the usual way, cheered the lecturer heartily when he took a drink of water, said "Silly old owl!" as they went out and at once forgot his Message. Not so Neil. With the clearness of vision that always comes to him when anything to his own advantage is toward, he saw that the time and the place and the loved one (himself) had arrived together. Portents in the sky revealed to him that his *métier* at school was to Help Others. There would be something sublime about it had he not also seen with the same vividness that he must make a pecuniary charge of threepence. He decided astutely to begin with W. W. Daly.

As we write these words an extraordinary change comes over our narrative. In the dead silence that follows this announcement to our readers you may hear, if you listen intently, a scurrying of feet, which is nothing less than Neil being chased out of the story. The situation is one probably unparalleled in fiction.

3. TINTINNABULUM

Elated by your curiosity we now leave Neil for a moment (say, searching with his foot for a clean shirt among a pile of clothing on the floor), mount

to the next landing and enter the second room on the left, the tenant of which immediately dives beneath his table under the impression that we are a fag-master shouting "Boy." We drag him out and present him to you as W. W. Daly. He is five feet one, biceps 7¾, and would probably kick the beam at about 6½ stone. He is not yet celebrated for anything except for being able to stick pins into his arm up to the head; otherwise a creature of small account who, but for Neil's patronage, would never have risen to the distinction of being written about, except perhaps by his mother.

W. W.'s first contact with school was made dark by a strange infirmity, an incapacity to remember the Latin equivalent for the word "bell." Many Latin words were as familiar to him as his socks (perhaps even more so, for he often wears the socks of others), and those words he would give you on demand with the brightness of a boy eager to oblige; but daily did his tutor insist (like one who will have nothing for breakfast but eggs and bacon) on having "bell" alone. Daily was W. W. floored.

It is now that Neil appears with his sunny offer of Help. He took up the case so warmly that he entirely neglected his own studies, which is one of his failings. True he charged threepence (which we shall henceforth write as 3*d*., as it is so sure to come often into these chronicles), but this detracts little

from his grandeur, for the mere apparatus required cost him what he calls a bob.

His first procedure was to affix to the bell-pull a card bearing in bold letters the device "Tintinnabulum." This seems simple but was complicated by there being no bell in W. W.'s room. Neil bought a bell (W. W. being "stony"), and round the walls he constructed a gigantic contrivance of wire and empty ginger-beer bottles, culminating at one end in the bell and at the other end in W. W.'s foot as he lay abed. The calculation, a well-founded one, was that if the sleeper tossed restlessly the bell would ring and he would awake. He was then, as instructed by Neil, first, to lie still but as alert as if visited by a ghost, and to think hard for the word. If, however, it still eluded him he was to turn upon it the electric torch, kept beneath his pillow for this purpose and borrowed at 1*d*. per week from Dolman mi., spot the tricky "Tintinnabulum" in its lair and say the word over to himself a number of times before returning to his slumbers, something attempted, something done to earn a night's repose.

All this did W. W. conscientiously do, and if there was delay in bringing Tintinnabulum to heel the fault was not that of Neil, but of inferior youths who used to substitute cards inscribed "Honorificabilitudinitatibus," "Porringer," "Xylobalsamum," "Beelzebobulus," and other likely words.

Eventually he achieved; a hard-won ribbon for his benefactor whom we are about to call Neil for the last time.

There was a feeling among those who had betted on the result that it should be celebrated in no uncertain manner, and a dinner with speeches not being feasible (though undoubtedly he would have liked it), he was re-christened Tintinnabulum, and the name stuck.

So Tintinnabulum let it be henceforth in these wandering pages. Neil the disinherited may be pictured pattering back to me on his naked soles and knocking me up in the night.

"Neil," I cry (in dressing gown and a candle), "what has happened? Have you run away from school?"

"Rather not," says the plaintive ghost, shivering closer to the fire, "I was kicked out."

"By your tutor?" I ask blanching.

"No, by Tintinnabulum. He is becoming such a swell among the juniors that he despises me and the old times. And now he has kicked me out."

"Drink this hot milk, Neil, and tell me more. What are those articles you are hugging beneath your pyjamas?"

"They are the Bruiser Belt and the score against Juddy's. He threw them out after me."

"Don't take it so much to heart, Neil. I'll find an

honoured place for them here, and you and I will have many a cosy talk by the fire about Tintinnabulum."

"I don't want to talk about him," he says, his hands so cold that he spills the milk, "I would rather talk about the days before there was him."

Well, perhaps that was what I meant.

Cruel Tintinnabulum.

4. THE BEST PARLOUR GAME

Soon after the events described in our last chapter I knew from Tintinnabulum's letters that he was again Helping. They were nevertheless communications so guarded as to be wrapped in mystery.

His letters from school tend at all times to be more full of instruction for my guidance than of information about where he stands in his form. I notice that he worries less than did an older generation about how I am to dress when I visit him, but he is as pressing as ever that the postal order should be despatched at once, and firmly refuses to write at all unless I enclose stamped envelopes. On important occasions he even writes my letters for me, requesting me to copy them carefully and not to put in any words of my own, as when for some reason they have to be shown to his tutor. He then writes, "Begin

'Dear T.' (not 'Dearest T.'), "and end 'Yours affec.' (not 'Yours affectionately')."

The mysterious letters that preceded the holidays were concerned with W. W. Daly, whom I was bidden (almost ordered) to invite to our home for that lengthy period, "as his mother is to be away at that time on frightfully important business in which I have a hand."

I was instructed to write "Dear Mrs. Daly (not "dearest"), I understand that you are to be away on important business during the holidays, and so I have the pleasure to ask you to allow your son to spend the holidays with me and my boy who is a general favourite and very diligent. Come, come, I will take no refusal, and I am, Yours affec."

I did as I was told, but as I now heard of the lady for the first time I thought it wisest not to sign my letter to her "Yours affec." Thus did I fall a victim to Tintinnabulum's wiles.

What could this frightfully important business of Mrs. Daly's be in which he "had a hand"?

You may say (when you hear of his dark design) that I should at once have insisted on an explanation, but explanations are barred in the sport that he and I play, which is the greatest of all parlour games, the Game of Trying to Know Each Other without asking questions. It is strictly a game for two, who, I suppose, should in perfect conditions be husband and

wife; it is played silently and it never lasts less than a life-time. In panegyrics on love (a word never mentioned between us two players), the game is usually held to have ended in a draw when they understand each other so well that before the one speaks or acts the other knows what he or she is going to say or do. This, however, is a position never truly reached in the game, and if it were reached, such a state of coma for the players could only be relieved by a cane in the hand of the stronger, or by the other bolting, to show him that there was one thing about her which he had still to learn.

No, no, these doited lovers when they think the haven is in sight have set sail only. Tintinnabulum and I have made a hundred moves, but we are well aware that we don't know each other yet; at least, I don't know Tintinnabulum, I won't swear that he does not think that he at last knows me. So when he brought W. W. home with him for the holidays it was for me to find out without inquiry how he had been helping Mrs. Daly (and for what sum). He knew that I was cogitating, I could see his impertinent face regarding me demurely, as if we were at a chess board and his last move had puzzled me, which indeed was the situation.

All I knew of her was that she had lately remarried and that W. W. had been invited to spend his holidays with us while she was away on her honeymoon.

Good heavens, could Tintinnabulum have had some Helping part in the lady's marriage? This boy is beginning to scare me.

I studied him and W. W. at their meals and stole upon them at their play. There could not have been more cherubic faces.

But then I remembered the two cherubic faces I had watched from a bridge.

5. TINTINNABULUM EATS AN APPLE

I went to Tintinnabulum's bed-chamber and told him I could not rest until I knew what he had been doing to that lady. In the days of Neil it had been a room of glamour, especially the bed therein, where were performed nightly between 6.15 and 6.30 precisely, the brighter plays of Shakespeare, two actors, but not a sign of them anywhere unless you became suspicious of the hump in the coverlet. Never have the plays gone with greater merriment since Mr. Shakespeare made up "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in his Judith's hump.

No glamour of course in the room of a public school-boy, unless it was provided by his discarded raiment, which lay like islands on the floor. However, I found Tintinnabulum in affable humour, sitting tailor-like in bed, dressed in half of his pyjamas, reading a book and eating an apple. He had doubt-

less found the apple or the book just as he was about to enter the other half of his night attire.

"What could I have been doing to her?" he asked invitingly. (He likes to be hunted.)

The robing of him having been completed, I said with humorous intent, "You may have been luring her into matrimony against her better judgment."

"She is nuts on him," Tintinnabulum said, taking my remark seriously.

"But you can't have had anything to do with it?"

He nodded, with his teeth in the apple.

"Of course this is nonsense," I said, though with a sinking, "you don't know her."

"I didn't need to know her for a thing like that."

I tried sarcasm. "I should have thought it was essential."

He shook his head.

"I heard W. W. say to-day," I continued in the same vein, "that she is spending the honeymoon on the Riviera; you are not implying, are you, that it was you who sent her there?"

"At any rate, if it hadn't been for me," he replied, taking a good bite, "she wouldn't be on the Riviera and there wouldn't be a honeymoon."

I became alarmed. "Take that apple out of your mouth and tell me what you mean."

The mysterious boy of the so open countenance, as he told me the queer tale in bed that night, was

superbly unaware of its queerness, and was more interested in standing on his head to see how far his feet would reach up the wall. He far exceeded the record that had been left by Neil.

"I wasn't the one who made her fond of the chappie," he said by way of beginning. "She did that bit herself."

"Very generous of you to give her that amount of choice," I conceded.

"But she stuck there," said he. "It was W. W. who told me how she had stuck. W. W. has a sister called Patricia. Their mother's name is Mildred. That is all I know about her," he added with great lightness of touch, "except that I worked the marriage."

This was the first time I had heard of W. W.'s having a sister.

"He doesn't speak about her much," Tintinnabulum explained, "because they are twins. I say, don't let on to him that I told you he was a twin."

So far as I can gather, W. W. keeps the existence of his girl twin dark from boys in general in case it should make them think less of him.

"He didn't ask me to help him out till things were in an awful mess at home, and then he showed me some of Patricia's letters."

"If I were cross-examining you," I pointed out, "I should say that your statement is not quite clear.

Tell the Jury what you mean, and don't blow the apple pips at the portrait of your uncle the bishop."

"I bet you I get him in the calves twice in three shots," he said.

"An ignoble ambition," I told him; "answer my question."

"Well, you see, Patricia had found out all about her mother's being fond of the man. His name begins with K, but I forget the rest of it."

I ventured to say that the least he could do for a man whose life he had so strangely altered was to remember his name.

"W. W. will know it," he said with the carelessness of genius.

"Even now," I pressed him, "I don't see where you come in. Did Patricia object to Mr. K.?"

"Oh, no, she thinks no end of him. So does W. W." He added handsomely, "I wouldn't have let her get married if they had shied at it."

"In that case—"

"It wasn't Patricia that was the bother," he explained, running the apple up and down his arm like a mouse, "it was Mrs. Daly. You know how funny ladies are about some things."

"I do not," I said severely.

"Well, it was about marrying a second time. Mrs. Daly couldn't make up her mind whether it would be fair to W. W. and Patricia. She knew they liked

him all right, but not whether they liked him as much as that."

"Tell me how Patricia found all this out, and don't bump about so much."

"She was watching," he replied airily. "She is that kind. I daresay the thing wasn't difficult to find out if all the stuff she said in her letters to W. W. was true. They were awful letters, saying her mother was in anguishes about what was the best thing to do for her progeny. One letter would say, 'Mr. K. made a lovely impression on mother to-day and I don't think she can resist much longer.' Then the next would say, 'I fear all is up, for they have been crying together in the drawing-room, and when he left he banged the door.' "

"Their mother hadn't a notion," Tintinnabulum assured me, making an eyeglass of the apple, "that they knew there was anything in the wind."

"Nor would they have had any such notion," I rapped out, "if they had been children of an earlier date."

"I suppose we are cleverer now," he admitted. He became introspective. "I expect the war did it. It's rummy what a difference the war has made. Before the war no one could hold two eggs in his mouth and hop across a pole. Now everyone can do it."

I requested him to stick to the point.

"Why didn't Patricia the emancipated go to her mother and inform her that all was well?"

"That is the very thing W. W. and she bickered about in their letters. He was always writing to her to do that, but she said it would be unladylike."

"Very un-shingled of her to trouble about that," I got in. "But had she any proposal to make to W. W.?"

"Rather. She was always badgering W. W. to write to their mother saying they knew all and wanted her to go at it blind. She thought it would come better from him, being male. That was what made him come to me in the end. He told me all about it and asked me if I could help."

"And what was your reply?" I asked with some interest. "Don't tell me," I added hurriedly (we were back at the game, you see), "I want to guess. You said immediately, 'All right'?"

He approved.

"Did it ever strike you," I enquired curiously, "that you might not be able to help?"

"I can't remember," the unfathomable one answered. "I say, would you like to see me do a dive over your head?"

Offer declined.

"You see," he continued, "W. W. is rather—rather—"

"Rather a retiring boy when there is trouble ahead," I suggested. "Well, what did you devise?"

"I said I couldn't do anything until I knew the colour of Patricia's hair and eyes."

This took me aback, though it is quite in Tintinnabulum's manner.

"How could that help?" I had to enquire instead of risking a move.

"I couldn't get a beginning," he insisted doggedly, "till I found out that." (To this day I don't know what he meant.)

"No difficulty in finding out from W. W.," I said.

Here I was wrong. W. W. had no idea of the colour of his dear little sister's eyes but presumed that, as he and she were twins, their eyes must be of the same hue. There followed a scene, undoubtedly worthy of some supreme artist, in which, by the light of a match, Tintinnabulum endeavoured to discover colour of W. W.'s eyes, W. W. being again unable to supply desired information. The match always going out just as Tintinnabulum was on the eve of discovery, it was decided by him that W. W. should write to his twin for particulars (letter dictated by Tintinnabulum). Patricia's reply was, "Who is it that wants to know? Eyes too expressive to be blue, too lovely to be grey," and it irritated the two seekers after truth.

"We didn't ask her what colour they were not," Tintinnabulum said to me witheringly, "but what colour they were."

In the end, rather than bother any more with her, they risked putting her eyes down as browny black.

This determined, Tintinnabulum apprized his client that Patricia was to write the letter that would make their mother happy. This nearly led to a rupture.

W. W. (*sitting,* as they say in the plays, though he might as well be standing): She can't write a letter to mother when they are living in the same house.

Tintinnabulum (*rising,* because W. W. sat): It would be a letter to you.

W. W. (*contemptibly*): That brings me into the thing again.

Tintinnabulum: Shut up and listen. The letter isn't to be posted. Your mother will find it lying open on Patricia's desk and read it on the sly.

W. W. (*nobly*): My mother never does things on the sly.

Tintinnabulum (*comprehensively*): Oh.

W. W. (*hedging*): What would the letter say?

Tintinnabulum: It would show her that you and Patricia knew what she was after and both wanted her to marry the chappie, and then she could put it back where she found it and never let on that she had seen it and make all her arrangements with a happy heart.

W. W.: That is what we want, but mother wouldn't read a letter on the sly.

Tintinnabulum (*after thinking it out when he should have been doing his prep.*): Look here, if she is so fussy we can tell Patricia to leave the letter open

on the floor as if it had blown there, and then when your mother picks it up to put it back on the desk she can't help taking a look at it.

W. W.: Would that not be reading it on the sly?

Tintinnabulum (*with cheerful cynicism*): Not for a woman.

W. W. (*depressed*): It will be an awfully difficult letter to write.

Tintinnabulum (*exultant*): Fearfully.

W. W.: I don't think Patricia could do it.

Tintinnabulum: Not she. I'll do it. Then you copy my letter and she copies yours.

W. W.: 3*d.*?

Tintinnabulum: Tons more than that.

This scheme was carried out, Tintinnabulum, after a thoughtful study of Patricia's epistolary style, producing something in this manner, no doubt with the holy look on his face that is always there when he knows he is concocting a masterpiece. (I regret that he has forgotten what he said in the introductory passage, which dealt in an artful feminine manner with her garments and was probably a beauty.)

"Darling Doubly Doubly,

. . . oh dear, I am so unhappy because I fear the match between darlingest mummy and Mr. K. is not to be hit off. Oh dear, she blows hot and cold and it makes me bleed to see the poor man's anguishes,

and you and me wanting it so much. If only I could think of a lady-like way to tell mummy that we know she wants it and that we want her to go ahead, but I cannot, and it would need a wonder of a man to do it. Oh dear, how lovely it would be, oh dear, how I wish I knew some frightfully clever person, oh dear—"

"I stopped there," Tintinnabulum told me. "I meant to put in a lot more before I finished, but I wouldn't let myself go on."

"Why?" I asked eagerly, aware that he had reached a great moment in his life.

"Because," he said heavily, "I saw all at once that I had come to the end." (We are so undemonstrative that I did not embrace him.)

The letter was left as arranged, on Mrs. Daly's floor, and I may say at once that everything went as planned by the Master. Can we not see Mildred (all authors have a right to call their heroine by her Christian name), opening the door of that room? Her beautiful face is down-cast, all the luckier for Tintinnabulum and Co., for she at once sees the life-giving sheet. She picks it up, meaning to replace it on the desk whence it has so obviously fluttered, when a word catches her eye, and not intending to read she reads. An exquisite flush tints her face as she recognises Patricia's inimitable style. The happy

woman is now best left to herself (Come away, Tintinnabulum, you imp).

Dear (not dearest) heroine, you little know who is responsible for your raptures, the indifferent lad now trying to twist one leg round his neck as he finishes his apple. Grudge us not the few minutes in which for literary purposes we have snatched you from the shores of the blue Mediterranean. Thither we now return you to cloudless days and to your K., roses in your cheeks (Tintinnabulum's roses). And you, O lucky K., when you encounter boys of thirteen, might do worse than have a mysterious prompting to give them a franc or so. I wish you both very happy, and I am, yours affec.

"Shall I send them your love?" I almost hear myself saying to Tintinnabulum.

"If you like," he replies, preoccupied with what is left of an apple when the apple itself has gone. For it must be admitted of him that he has not boasted of his achievement. His only comment was modesty itself, "Two bob," he said.

It is almost appalling to reflect that no woman who knows Tintinnabulum (and has two bob) need remain single. And what character apples have, even when being consumed; if I had given him an orange or a pear this chapter would be quite different. With such deep thoughts I put out his light, and took away the other apple which he had hidden beneath his pillow.

6. NEMESIS

As the holidays waned (and after W. W. was safely stowed away in bed) Tintinnabulum gratified me by being willing to talk about Neil. If you had heard us at it you would have sworn that those two had no very close connection, that Neil was merely some interesting whipper-snapper who had played about the house until the manlier Tintinnabulum arrived. He was always spoken of between us as Neil, which obviously suited Tintinnabulum's dignity, but I wonder how I took to it so naturally myself. I hope I am not a queer one.

By that arrangement Tintinnabulum can make artful enquiries, not unwistful, into his own past, and I can seem (thus goes the game) not to know that he is doing so. He can even commend Neil.

"Pretty decent of him," he says, discussing the Bruiser Belt and the score against Juddy's.

"I didn't think he had it in him," is even stronger about the sea-trout Neil had landed and been so proud of that he would not lie prone till it was put in a basin by his bedside. He had then slept with one arm over the basin.

Strongest of all is to say that Neil was mad, at present a term not only of approval but even of endearment at the only school that counts (Tintinnabulum speaking). Sometimes we talk of the dark

period when Neil, weeping over his first Latin grammar, used to put a merry tune on the gramaphone to accompany his woe. He continued to weep as he studied, but always rose at the right time to change the tune. This is a heart-breaker of a memory to me, and Tintinnabulum knows it and puts his hand deliciously on my shoulder (that kindest gesture of man to man).

"The gander must have been mad, quite mad," he says hurriedly.

How Neil would like to hear Tintinnabulum saying these nice things about him.

Perhaps we all have a Neil. Have you ever wakened suddenly in the night, certain that you heard a bell ring as it once rang or a knocking on your door as only one could knock or a voice of long ago, quite close? Sometimes you rise and wander the house; more often, after waiting alert for a repetition of the sound, you decide that you have been dreaming or that it was the creaking of a window or a board. But I daresay it was none of these things. I daresay it was your Neil.

Perhaps you have become something quite different from what he meant to be. Perhaps he wants to get into the house, not to gaze proudly at you but to strike you.

Some drop their Neil deliberately and can recall clearly the day of the great decision, but most are un-

aware that he has gone. For instance, it may have been Neil who married the lady and you who gradually took his place, so like him in appearance that she is as deceived as you. Or it may be that she has found you out and knows who it is that is knocking on the door trying to get back to her. You might be scared if you knew that though she is at this moment attending to your wants with a smile for you on her face, her passionate wish is to be done with you. On the other hand, you may be the better fellow of the two. Let us decide that this is how it is.

The last week of the holidays was darkened for Tintinnabulum and W. W. by the shadow of a letter demanded of them by their tutor. It had to be on one of three subjects:

(*a*) Your Favourite Walk.
(*b*) Your Favourite Game.
(*c*) What shall I do next Half?

A nasty tag attached to m' tutor's order said "the letter must be of great length." Little had they troubled about it till the end loomed, but then they rumbled wrathfully; well was it for their tutor he heard not what they said of him.

Tintinnabulum of course was merely lazy, or on principle resented writing anything for less than 3*d*. Grievous, however, was the burden on W. W., whose gifts lie not in a literary direction. He is al-

ways undone by his clear-headed way of putting everything he knows on any subject into the first sentence. He had a shot at (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*).

Attempt on (*a*). "My favourite walk is when I do not have far to go to it." (Here he stuck.)

Attempt on (*b*). "The game of cricket is my favourite game, and it consists of six stumps, two bats and a ball." After wandering round the table many times he added, "Nor must we forget the bails." (Stuck again.)

Attempt on (*c*). "Next half is summer half, so early school will be half an hour earlier." (Final stick.)

He then abandoned hope and would, I suppose, have had to run away to sea (if boys still do that) had not Help been nigh.

For a consideration (and you can now guess exactly how much it was) Tintinnabulum offered to write W. W.'s letter for him. I did not see it till later (as you shall learn), indeed the episode was purposely kept dark from me. The subject chosen was "My Favourite Walk," because Tintinnabulum had a book entitled Walks and Talks with the Little Ones, which never before had he thought might come in handy. Of course such a performer by no means confined himself to purloining from this work, though he did have something to say about how W. W. wandered along his walk carrying a

little book into which he put "interesting plants." Anything less like W. W. thus engaged I cannot conceive, unless it be Tintinnabulum himself.

The miscreant also carefully misspelt several words, as being natural to W. W. Unfortunately (his fatal weakness) he could not keep his own name out of the letter, and he made W. W. say that the favourite walk was "near the house of my kind friend Tintinnabulum, and you know him, sir, for he is in your house, and I mess with him, which is very lucky for me, all the scugs wanting to mess with him and nobody wanting me."

Could brainy critics, peeled for the pounce, read that human document they would doubtless pause to enquire into its hidden meaning. On the surface it was written (*a*) to get 3*d*. out of W. W., (*b*) to give relief to Tintinnabulum's ego. To the ordinary reader (with whom to-day we have no concern) this might suffice, but the digger would ask, what is the philosophy of life advanced by the author, is the whole thing an allegory and if so, what is Tintinnabulum's Message; in short, is he, like the commoner writers, merely saying what he says, or, like the big chaps, something quite different?

Had his tutor considered the letter thus, we might have had a most interesting analysis of it (and no one would have been more interested than Tintinnabulum). But though a favourite of mine (and

also of Tintinnabulum) his tutor is just slightly Victorian, and he went for the letter like one of the illiterate.

It was not seen by me until the two hopefuls returned to school, when I received it from their tutor with another one which is uncommonly like it. Investigation has elicited the following data, for which kindly allow me to use (*a*), (*b*) and (*c*) again, as I have taken a fancy to them.

(*a*) Letter is read and approved by W. W.

(*b*) W. W. on reflection objects to passage about the honour of messing with Tintinnabulum.

(*c*) Ultimatum issued by Tintinnabulum that the passage must be retained.

(*d*) MS. haughtily returned to the author.

(*e*) The author alters a few words and sends in letter as his own.

(*f*) W. W. has made a secret copy of the letter and sends it in as his, with the objectionable passage deleted.

(*g*) Their tutor smells a rat.

(*h*) He takes me into his confidence.

(*i*) Days pass but I remain inactive.

(*j*) He puts the affair into the hands of Beverley, the head of the house.

(*k*) Triumph of Miss Rachel.

Miss Rachel who is an old friend of ours is slight and frail, say 5 ft. 3, her biceps cannot be formida-

ble and I question whether she could kick the beam however favourably it was placed for her. She is such an admirer of Tintinnabulum that he occasionally writhes, in his fuller knowledge of the subject.

Having led a quiet and uneventful life (so far as I know), Miss Rachel suddenly shoots into the light through her acquaintance with the Beverleys of Winch Park, which is, as it were, nothing; but the great Beverley, Beverley the thunderous, who is head of m' tutor's house, is a scion of that family; and now you see what a swell Miss Rachel has become. When Neil (as he then was) was entered for that great school she wrote to Beverley—fancy knowing someone who can write to Beverley—telling him (to Neil's indignation) what a darling her young friend was and hoping Beverley would look after him and make him his dear little fag. Months elapsed before a reply came, but when it did come it really referred to Tintinnabulum and contained these pregnant words: "As to the person in whom you are interested, I look after him a good deal, and the more I see of him the more I lick him."

Miss Rachel showed me the letter with exultation. So kind of him, she said, though she was a little distressed that a strapping fellow like Beverley should spell so badly.

More recently I had a letter from Tintinnabulum,

which I showed to her as probably denoting the final transaction in the affair of the letter.

"W. W. and I," it announced very cheerily, "saw Beverley yesterday in his room and he gave each of us six of the best."

"How charming of Beverley!" Miss Rachel said.

"The best what?" she enquired, but I cannot have heard her, for I made no answer.

I learn that sometimes she thinks it was probably cakes and at other times fives balls, which she knows to be in great demand at that school. I shall not be surprised if Miss Rachel sends a dozen of the best to Beverley.

7. HOW TO WRITE A COLLINS

I note that the dozen of the best shared by these two odd creatures seems to have made them pals again. The proof is that though they began the new half by messing with other youths they are now once more messing together.

"That priceless young cub, W. W.," occurs in one letter of Tintinnabulum's.

"W. W. is the lad for me," he says in the next.

Again, I have a note of thanks for hospitality from W. W. in which he remarks, "Tintinnabulum is as ripping as ever." This, however, is to be discounted, as, though the letter is signed W. W. Daly, I recog-

nise in it another hand, I recognise this other hand so clearly that I can add a comment in brackets (*3d.*).

Yes, I can do so (because of a game I have long been playing), but any other person would be deceived, just as m' tutor was at first deceived by the epistles on the favourite walk. He told me that these were so fragrant of W. W. that he had thought Tintinnabulum must be the copy-cat. Indeed, thus it was held until W. W. nobly made confession.

What I must face is this, that Tintinnabulum, being (alas) an artist, has been inside W. W. Not only so, he has since his return to school been inside at least half a dozen other boys, searching for Collinses for them.

A Collins, as no one, perhaps except Miss Austen, needs to be told, is the fashionable name for a letter of thanks for hospitality to a host or hostess. Thus W. W.'s letter to me was a Collins. Somehow its fame has spread through his house, and now Tintinnabulum is as one possessed, writing threepenny Collinses for the deficient. They are small boys as yet, but as the quality of his Help is trumpeted to other houses I conceive Fields, Blues and Choices knocking at his door and begging for a Collins. It will be a great day for Tintinnabulum when Beverley applies.

The Collins letter is a fine art in which those who try the hardest often fall most heavily, and perhaps

even m' tutor or the Provost Himself, at his wit's end how to put it neatly this time, will yet crave a 3*d*. worth. It may even be that readers grown grey in the country's service, who quake at thought of the looming Collins, would like to have Tintinnabulum's address. It is refused; but I mention, to fret them, that his every Collins is guaranteed different from all his other Collinses, and to be so like the purchaser that it is a photograph.

If you were his client you could accept Saturday to Monday invitations with a light heart. But don't, when he is at your Collins, go near him and the babe lest he clutch it to his breast and growl. He has the great gift of growling, which will yet make him popular with another sex.

His concentration on the insides of others is of course very disturbing to me, but I should feel still more alarmed if I heard that he had abandoned the monetary charge and, for sheer love of the thing, was turning out Collinses gratis.

To-day there comes a ray of hope from a harassed tutor, who writes that Tintinnabulum has deserted the Collins for googly bowling, the secrets of which he is pursuing with the same terrific intensity. I can picture him getting inside the ball.

8. HE AND I AND ANOTHER

You readers may smile when I tell you why I have indited these memories and fancies. It was not done for you but for me, being a foolish attempt to determine, by writing the things down (playing over by myself some of the past moves in the game), whether Tintinnabulum really does like me still. That he should do so is very important to me as he recedes farther from my ken down that road which hurries him from me. I cannot, however, after all, give myself a very definite answer. He no longer needs me of course, as Neil did, and he will go on needing me less. When I think of Neil I know that those were the last days in which I was alive.

Tintinnabulum's opinion of himself, except when he is splashing, is lowlier than was Neil's; sometimes in dark moods it is lowlier than makes for happiness. He has hardened a little since he was Neil, coarsened but strengthened. I comfort myself with the curious reflection that the best men I have known have had a touch of coarseness in them.

Perhaps I have made too much of the occasional yieldings of this boy whom I now know so superficially. The new life is building seven walls around him. Are such of his moves in the game as I can follow merely an expert's kindness to an indifferent player?

On the other hand, I learn from a friendly source that he has spoken of me with approval, once at least, as "mad, quite mad," and I know that my battered countenance, about which I am very "touchy," excites his pity as well as his private mirth. On the last night of the holidays he was specially gruff, but he slipped beneath my door a paper containing the words "I hereby solemnly promise never to give you cause for moral anxiety," and signed his name across a postage stamp to give the document a special significance. Nevertheless, W. W. and he certainly do at times exchange disturbing glances of which I am the object, and these, I notice, occur when I think I am talking well. Again, if I set off to tell a humorous story in company nothing can exceed the agony on Tintinnabulum's face. Yet I am uncertain that this is not a compliment, for if he felt indifferently toward me why should he worry about my fate?

During those holidays a master at his old preparatory sent me a letter he had received from Tintinnabulum (whom he called Neil), saying that as it was about me he considered I ought to read it. But I had not the courage to do so. Quite likely it was favourable, but suppose it hadn't been. Besides, it was not meant for me to see, and I cling to his dewdrop about my being mad. On the whole, I think he is still partial to me. Corroboration, I consider, was provided at our parting, when he so skilfully

turned what began as a tear into a wink and gazed at me from the disappearing train with what I swear was a loving scowl.

What will become of Tintinnabulum? There was a horror looking for him in his childhood. Waking dreams we called them, and they lured Neil out of bed in the night. It was always the same nameless enemy he was seeking, and he stole about in various parts of the house in search of it, probing fiercely for it in cupboards, or standing at the top of the stairs pouring out invective and shouting challenges to it to come up. I have known the small white figure defend the stair-head thus for an hour, blazing rather than afraid, concentrated on some dreadful matter in which, tragically, none could aid him. I stood or sat by him, like a man in an adjoining world, waiting till he returned to me, for I had been advised, warned, that I must not wake him abruptly. Gradually I soothed him back to bed, and though my presence there in the morning told him, in the light language we then adopted, that he had been "at it again" he could remember nothing of who the enemy was. It had something to do with the number 7; that was all we ever knew. Once I slipped from the room, thinking it best that he should wake to normal surroundings, but that was a mistake. He was violently agitated by my absence. In some vague way he seemed on the stairs to have known that I

was with him and to have got comfort from it; he said he had gone back to bed only because he knew I should be there when he woke up. I found that he liked, "after he had been an ass," to wake up seeing me "sitting there doing something frightfully ordinary, like reading the newspaper," and you may be sure that thereafter that was what I was doing.

After he had been a year or two at his preparatory, Neil did a nice thing for me; one of a thousand. I had shaken my head over his standing so low in Maths, though he was already a promising classic, and had said that it was "great fun to be good at what one was bad at." A term or two later when he came home he thrust the Maths prize into my hand. "But it wasn't fun," he growled. (It was Neil's growl before it was Tintinnabulum's.) He came back to blurt out, "I did it because in those bad times you were always sitting there with the newspaper when I woke."

By becoming Tintinnabulum he is not done with his unknown foe, though I think they have met but once. On this occasion his dame had remained with him all night, as he had been slightly unwell, and she was amused, but nothing more, to see him, without observing her, rise and search the room in a fury of words for something that was not there. The only word she caught was "seven." He asked them not to tell me of this incident, as he knew it would trouble me. I was told, and, indeed, almost expected

the news, for I had sprung out of bed that night thinking I heard Neil once again defending the stair. By the time I reached Tintinnabulum it had ceased to worry him. "But when I woke I missed the newspaper," he said with his adorable smile, and again putting his hand on my shoulder. How I wished "the newspaper" could have been there. There are times when a boy can be as lonely as God.

What is the danger? What is it that he knows in the times during which he is shut away and that he cannot remember to tell to himself or to me when he wakes? I am often disturbed when thinking of him (which is the real business of my life), regretting that, in spite of advice and warnings, I did not long ago risk waking him abruptly, when, before it could hide, he might have clapped seeing eyes upon it, and thus been able to warn me. Then, knowing the danger, I would for ever after be on the watch myself, so that when the moment came, I could envelop him as with wings. These are, of course, only foolish fears of the dark, and with morning they all fly away. Tintinnabulum makes very merry over them. I have a new thought that, when he is inside me, he may leave them there deliberately to play upon my weakness for him and so increase his sock allowance. Is the baffling creature capable of this enormity? With bowed head I must admit he is. I make a note, to be more severe with him this half.

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AN EDINBURGH ELEVEN

CHAPTER I

LORD ROSEBERY

THE first time I ever saw Lord Rosebery was in Edinburgh when I was a student, and I flung a clod of earth at him. He was a peer; those were my politics.

I missed him, and I have heard a good many journalists say since then that he is a difficult man to hit. One who began by liking him and is now scornful, which is just the reverse process from mine, told me the reason why. He had some brochures to write on the Liberal leaders, and got on nicely till he reached Lord Rosebery, where he stuck. In vain he walked round his lordship, looking for an opening. The man was naturally indignant; he is the father of a family.

Lord Rosebery is forty-one years of age, and has missed many opportunities of becoming the bosom friend of Lord Randolph Churchill. They were at Eton together and at Oxford, and have met since. As a boy the Liberal played at horses, and the Tory at running off with other boys' caps. Lord Randolph was the more distinguished at the University. One day a proctor ran him down in the streets smok-

ing in his cap and gown. The undergraduate remarked on the changeability of the weather, but the proctor, gasping at such bravado, demanded his name and college. Lord Randolph failed to turn up next day at St. Edmund Hall to be lectured, but strolled to the Proctor's house about dinner-time. "Does a fellow, name of Moore, live here?" he asked. The footman contrived not to faint. "He do," he replied, severely; "but he are at dinner." "Ah! take him in my card," said the unabashed caller. The Merton books tell that for this the noble lord was fined ten pounds.

There was a time when Lord Rosebery would have reformed the House of Lords to a site nearer Newmarket. As politics took a firmer grip of him, it was Newmarket that seemed a long way off. One day at Edinburgh he realized the disadvantage of owning swift horses. His brougham had met him at Waverley Station to take him to Dalmeny. Lord Rosebery opened the door of the carriage to put in some papers, and then turned away. The coachman, too well bred to look round, heard the door shut, and thinking that his master was inside, set off at once. Pursuit was attempted, but what was there in Edinburgh streets to make up on those horses? The coachman drove seven miles, until he reached a point in the Dalmeny parks where it was his lordship's custom to alight and open a gate. Here the

brougham stood for some minutes, awaiting Lord Rosebery's convenience. At last the coachman became uneasy and dismounted. His brain reeled when he saw an empty brougham. He could have sworn to seeing his lordship enter. There were his papers. What had happened? With a quaking hand the horses were turned, and, driving back, the coachman looked fearfully along the sides of the road. He met Lord Rosebery travelling in great good humour by the luggage omnibus.

Whatever is to be Lord Rosebery's future, he has reached that stage in a statesman's career when his opponents cease to question his capacity. His speeches showed him long ago a man of brilliant parts. His tenure of the Foreign Office proved him heavy metal. Were the Gladstonians to return to power, the other Cabinet posts might go anywhere, but the Foreign Secretary is arranged for. Where his predecessors had clouded their meaning in words till it was as wrapped up as a Mussulman's head, Lord Rosebery's were the straightforward dispatches of a man with his mind made up. German influence was spoken of; Count Herbert Bismarck had been seen shooting Lord Rosebery's partridges. This was the evidence: there has never been any other, except that German methods commended themselves to the Minister rather than those of France. His relations with the French Government were cor-

dial. "The talk of Bismarck's shadow behind Rosebery," a great French politician said lately, "I put aside with a smile; but how about the Jews?" Probably few persons realize what a power the Jews are in Europe, and in Lord Rosebery's position he is a strong man if he holds his own with them. Any fears on that ground have, I should say, been laid by his record at the Foreign Office.

Lord Rosebery had once a conversation with Prince Bismarck, to which, owing to some oversight, the Paris correspondent of the *Times* was not invited. M. Blowitz only smiled good-naturedly, and of course his report of the proceedings appeared all the same. Some time afterwards Lord Rosebery was introduced to this remarkable man, who, as is well known, carries Cabinet appointments in his pocket, and complimented him on his report. "Ah, it was all right, was it?" asked Blowitz, beaming. Lord Rosebery explained that any fault it had was that it was all wrong. "Then if Bismarck did not say that to you," said Blowitz, regally, "I know he intended to say it."

The "Uncrowned King of Scotland" is a title that has been made for Lord Rosebery, whose country has had faith in him from the beginning. Mr. Gladstone is the only other man who can make so many Scotsmen take politics as if it were the Highland Fling. Once when Lord Rosebery was firing an

Edinburgh audience to the delirium point, an old man in the hall shouted out, "I dinna hear a word he says, but it's grand, it's grand!" During the first Midlothian campaign Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery were the father and son of the Scottish people. Lord Rosebery rode into fame on the top of that wave, and he has kept his place in the hearts of the people, and in oleographs on their walls, ever since. In all Scottish matters he has the enthusiasm of a Burns dinner, and his humour enables him to pay compliments. When he says agreeable things to Scotsmen about their country, there is a twinkle in his eye and in theirs to which English scribes cannot give a meaning. He has unveiled so many Burns statues that an American lecturess explains, "Curious thing, but I feel somehow I am connected with Lord Rosebery. I go to a place and deliver a lecture on Burns; they collect subscriptions for a statue, and he unveils it." Such is the delight of the Scottish students in Lord Rosebery, that he may be said to have made the triumphal tour of the northern universities as their Lord Rector; he lost the post in Glasgow lately through a quibble, but had the honour with the votes. His address to the Edinburgh undergraduates on "Patriotism" was the best thing he ever did outside politics, and made the students his for life. Some of them had smuggled into the hall a chair with "Gaelic chair" placarded on it, and

the Lord Rector unwittingly played into their hands. In a noble peroration he exhorted his hearers to high aims in life. "Raise your country," he exclaimed (cheers); "raise yourselves" (renewed cheering); "raise your university" (thunders of applause). From the back of the hall came a solemn voice, "Raise the chair!" Up went the Gaelic chair.

Even Lord Rosebery's views on Imperial Federation can become a compliment to Scotland. Having been all over the world himself, and felt how he grew on his travels, Lord Rosebery maintains that every British statesman should visit India and the Colonies. He said that first at a semi-public dinner in the country—and here I may mention that on such occasions he has begun his speeches less frequently than any other prominent politician with a statement that others could be got to discharge the duty better; in other words, he has several times omitted this introduction. On his return to London he was told that his colleagues in the Administration had been seeing how his scheme would work out. "We found that if your rule were enforced, the Cabinet would consist of yourself and Childers." "This would be an ideal Cabinet," Lord Rosebery subsequently remarked in Edinburgh, "for it would be entirely Scottish;" Mr. Childers being member for a Scottish constituency.

The present unhappy division of the Liberal party

has made enemies of friends for no leading man so little as for Lord Rosebery. There are forces working against him, no doubt, in comparatively high places, but the Unionists have kept their respect for him. His views may be wrong, but he is about the only Liberal leader, with the noble exception of Lord Hartington, of whom troublous times have not rasped the temper. Though a great reader, he is not a literary man like Mr. Morley, who would, however, be making phrases where Lord Rosebery would make laws. Sir William Harcourt has been spoken of as a possible Prime Minister, but surely it will never come to that. If Mr. Gladstone's successor is chosen from those who have followed him on the Home Rule question, he probably was not rash in himself naming Lord Rosebery.

Lord Rosebery could not now step up without stepping into the Premiership. His humour, which is his most obvious faculty, has been a prop to him many a time ere now, but, if I was his adviser, I should tell him that it had served its purpose. There are a great many excellent people who shake their heads over it in a man who has become a power in the land. "Let us be grave," said Dr. Johnson once to a merry companion, "for here comes a fool." In an unknown novel there is a character who says of himself that "he is not stupid enough ever to be a great man." I happen to know that this reflection

was evolved by the author out of thinking over Lord Rosebery. It is not easy for a bright man to be heavy, and Lord Rosebery's humour is so spontaneous that if a joke is made in their company he has always finished laughing before Lord Hartington begins. Perhaps when Lord Rosebery is on the point of letting his humour run off with him in a public speech he could recover his solemnity by thinking of the *Examiner*.

CHAPTER II

PROFESSOR MASSON

THOUGH a man might, to my mind, be better employed than in going to college, it is his own fault if he does not strike on some one there who sends his life off at a new angle. If, as I take it, the glory of a professor is to give elastic minds their proper bent, Masson is a name his country will retain a grip of. There are men who are good to think of, and as a rule we only know them from their books. Something of our pride in life would go with their fall. To have one such professor at a time is the most a university can hope of human nature, so Edinburgh need not expect another just yet. These, of course, are only to be taken as the reminiscences of a student. I seem to remember everything Masson said, and the way he said it.

Having immediately before taken lodgings in a crow's nest, my first sight of Masson was specially impressive. It was the opening of the session, when fees were paid, and a whisper ran round the quadrangle that Masson had set off home with three hun-

dred one-pound notes stuffed into his trouser pockets. There was a solemn swell of awestruck students to the gates, and some of us could not help following him. He took his pockets coolly. When he stopped it was at a second-hand book-stall, where he rummaged for a long time. Eventually he pounced upon a dusty, draggled little volume, and went off proudly with it beneath his arm. He seemed to look suspiciously at strangers now, but it was not the money but the book he was keeping guard over. His pockets, however, were unmistakably bulging out. I resolved to go in for literature.

Masson, however, always comes to my memory first knocking nails into his desk or trying to tear the gas-bracket from its socket. He said that the Danes scattered over England, taking such a hold as a nail takes when it is driven into wood. For the moment he saw his desk turned into England; he whirled an invisible hammer in the air, and down it came on the desk with a crash. No one who has sat under Masson can forget how the Danes nailed themselves upon England. His desk is thick with their tombstones. It was when his mind groped for an image that he clutched the bracket. He seemed to tear his good things out of it. Silence overcame the class. Some were fascinated by the man; others trembled for the bracket. It shook, groaned, and yielded. Masson said another of the things that

made his lectures literature; the crisis was passed; and everybody breathed again.

He masters a subject by letting it master him; for though his critical reputation is built on honesty, it is his enthusiasm that makes his work warm with life. Sometimes he entered the classroom so full of what he had to say that he began before he reached his desk. If he was in the middle of a peroration when the bell rang, even the back-benches forgot to empty. There were the inevitable students to whom literature is a trial, and sometimes they call attention to their sufferings by a scraping of the feet. Then the Professor tried to fix his eyeglass on them, and when it worked properly they were transfixed. As a rule, however, it required so many adjustments that by the time his eye took hold of it he had remembered that students were made so, and his indignation went. Then, with the light in his eye that some photographer ought to catch, he would hope that his lecture was not disturbing their conversation. It was characteristic of his passion for being just that when he had criticised some writer severely he would remember that the back-benches could not understand that criticism and admiration might go together, unless they were told so again.

The test of a sensitive man is that he is careful of wounding the feelings of others. Once, I remember, a student was reading a passage aloud, assuming

at the same time such an attitude that the Professor could not help remarking that he looked like a teapot. It was exactly what he did look like, and the class applauded. But next moment Masson had apologized for being personal. Such reminiscences are what make the old literature classroom to thousands of graduates a delight to think of.

When the news of Carlyle's death reached the room, Masson could not go on with his lecture. Every one knows what Carlyle has said of him; and no one who has heard it will ever forget what he has said of Carlyle. Here were two men who understood each other. One of the Carlylean pictures one loves to dwell on shows them smoking together, with nothing breaking the pauses but Mrs. Carlyle's needles. Carlyle told Masson how he gave up smoking and then took to it again. He had walked from Dumfriesshire to Edinburgh to consult a doctor about his health, and was advised to lose his pipe. He smoked no more, but his health did not improve, and then one day he walked in a wood. At the foot of a tree lay a pipe, a tobacco pouch, a match-box. He saw clearly that this was a case of Providential interference, and from that moment he smoked again. There the Professor's story stops. I have no doubt, though, that he nodded his head when Carlyle explained what the pipe and tobacco were doing there. Masson's "Milton" is, of course, his great

work, but for sympathetic analysis I know nothing to surpass his "Chatterton." Lecturing on Chatterton one day, he remarked, with a slight hesitation, that had the poet mixed a little more in company and—and smoked, his morbidness would not have poisoned him. That turned my thoughts to smoking, because I meant to be a Chatterton, but greater. Since then the Professor has warned me against smoking too much. He was smoking at the time.

This is no place to follow Masson's career, nor to discuss his work. To reach his position one ought to know his definition of a man-of-letters. It is curious, and, like most of his departures from the generally accepted, sticks to the memory. By a man-of-letters he does not mean the poet, for instance, who is all soul, so much as the strong-brained writer whose guardian angel is a fine sanity. He used to mention John Skelton, the Wolsey satirist, and Sir David Lindsay, as typical men-of-letters from this point of view, and it is as a man-of-letters of that class that Masson is best considered. In an age of many whipper-snappers in criticism he is something of a Gulliver.

The students in that class liked to see their professor as well as hear him. I let my hair grow long because it only annoyed other people, and one day there was dropped into my hand a note containing sixpence and the words: "The students sitting be-

hind you present their compliments, and beg that you will get your hair cut with the enclosed, as it interferes with their view of the professor.

Masson, when he edited "Macmillan's," had all the best men round him. His talk of Thackeray is specially interesting, but he always holds that in conversation Douglas Jerrold was unapproachable. Jerrold told him a good story of his sea-faring days. His ship was lying off Gibraltar, and for some hours Jerrold, though only a midshipman, was left in charge. Some of the sailors begged to get ashore, and he let them, on the promise that they would bring him back some oranges. One of them disappeared, and the midshipman suffered for it. More than twenty years afterwards Jerrold was looking in at a window in the Strand when he seemed to know the face of a weather-beaten man who was doing the same thing. Suddenly he remembered, and put his hand on the other's shoulder. "My man," he said, "you have been a long time with those oranges!" The sailor recognized him, turned white, and took to his heels. There is, too, the story of how Dickens and Jerrold made up their quarrel at the Garrick Club. It was the occasion on which Masson first met the author of "Pickwick." Dickens and Jerrold had not spoken for a year, and they both happened to have friends at dinner in the strangers' room, Masson being Jerrold's guest. The two hosts sat back to back,

but did not address each other, though the conversation was general. At last Jerrold could stand it no longer. Turning, he exclaimed, "Charley, my boy, how are you?" Dickens wheeled round and grasped his hand.

Many persons must have noticed that, in appearance, Masson is becoming more and more like Carlyle every year. How would you account for it? It is a thing his old students often discuss when they meet, especially those of them who, when at college, made up their minds to dedicate their first book to him. The reason they seldom do it is because the book does not seem good enough.

CHAPTER III

PROFESSOR JOHN STUART BLACKIE

LATELY I was told that Blackie—one does not say Mr. Cromwell—is no longer Professor of Greek in Edinburgh University. What nonsense some people talk. As if Blackie were not part of the building. In his class one day he spoke touchingly of the time when he would have to join Socrates in the Elysian fields. A student cheered—no one knows why. "It won't be for some time yet," added John Stuart.

Blackie takes his ease at home in a dressing-gown and straw hat. This shows that his plaid really does come off. "My occupation nowadays," he said to me recently, "is business, blethers, bothers, beggars, and backgammon." He has also started a profession of going to public meetings, and hurrying home to write letters to the newspapers about them. When the editor shakes the manuscript a sonnet falls out. I think I remember the Professor saying that he had never made five shillings by his verses. To my mind they are worth more than that.

Though he has explained them frequently, there

is still confusion about Blackie's politics. At Manchester they thought he was a Tory, and invited him to address them on that understanding. "I fancy I astonished them," the Professor said to me. This is quite possible. Then he was mistaken for a Liberal.

The fact is that Blackie is a philosopher who follows the golden mean. He sees this himself. A philosopher who follows the golden mean is thus a man who runs zig-zag between two extremes. You will observe that he who does this is some time before he arrives anywhere.

The Professor has said that he has the strongest lungs in Scotland. Of the many compliments that might well be paid him, not the least worthy would be this, that he is as healthy mentally as physically. Mrs. Norton begins a novel with the remark that one of the finest sights conceivable is a well-preserved gentleman of middle-age. It will be some time yet before Blackie reaches middle-age, but there must be something wrong with you if you can look at him without feeling refreshed. Did you ever watch him marching along Princes Street on a warm day, when every other person was broiling in the sun? His head is well thrown back, the staff, grasped in the middle, jerks back and forward like a weaver's shuttle, and the plaid flies in the breeze. Other people's clothes are hanging limp. Blackie carries his breeze with him.

A year or two ago Mr. Gladstone, when at Dalmeny, pointed out that he had the advantage over Blackie in being of both Highland and Lowland extraction. The Professor, however, is as Scotch as the thistle of his native hills, and Mr. Gladstone, quite justifiably, considers him the most outstanding of living Scotsmen. Blackie is not quite sure himself. Not long ago I heard him read a preface to a life of Mr. Gladstone that was being printed at Smyrna in modern Greek. He told his readers to remember that Mr. Gladstone was a great scholar and an upright statesman. They would find it easy to do this if they first remembered that he was Scottish.

The *World* included Blackie in its list of "Celebrities at Home." It said that the door was opened by a red-headed lassie. That was probably meant for local colour, and it amused every one who knew Mrs. Blackie. The Professor is one of the most genial of men, and will show you to your room himself, talking six languages. This tends to make the conversation one-sided, but he does not mind that. He still writes a good deal, spending several hours in his library daily, and his talk is as brilliant as ever. His writing nowadays is less sustained than it was, and he prefers flitting from one subject to another to evolving a great work. When he dips his pen into an ink-pot it at once writes a sonnet—so strong is the force of habit. Recently he wrote a page about Car-

lyle in a little book issued by the Edinburgh students' bazaar committee. In this he reproved Carlyle for having "bias." Blackie wonders why people should have bias.

Some readers of this may in their student days have been invited to the Greek professor's house to breakfast without knowing why they were selected from among so many. It was not, as they are probably aware, because of their classical attainments, for they were too thoughtful to be in the prize-list; nor was it because of the charm of their manners or the fascination of their conversation. When the Professor noticed any physical peculiarity about a student, such as a lisp, or a glass eye, or one leg longer than the other, or a broken nose, he was at once struck by it, and asked him to breakfast. They were very lively breakfasts, the eggs being served in tureens; but sometimes it was a collection of the maimed and crooked, and one person at the table—not the host himself—used to tremble lest, making mirrors of each other, the guests should see why they were invited.

Sometimes, instead of asking a student to breakfast, Blackie would instruct another student to request his company to tea. Then the two students were told to talk about paulo-post futures in the cool of the evening, and to read their Greek Testament and to go to the pantomime. The Professor never

tired of giving his students advice about the preservation of their bodily health. He strongly recommended a cold bath at six o'clock every morning. In winter, he remarked genially, you can break the ice with a hammer. According to himself, only one enthusiast seems to have followed his advice, and he died.

In Blackie's classroom there used to be a demonstration every time he mentioned the name of a distinguished politician. Whether the demonstration took the Professor by surprise, or whether he waited for it, will never, perhaps, be known. But Blackie at least put out the gleam in his eye, and looked as if he were angry. "I will say Beaconsfield," he would exclaim (cheers and hisses). "Beaconsfield" (uproar). Then he would stride forward, and, seizing the railing, announce his intention of saying Beaconsfield until every goose in the room was tired of cackling. ("Question.") "Beaconsfield." ("No, no.") "Beaconsfield." ("Hear, hear," and shouts of "Gladstone.") "Beaconsfield." ("Three cheers for Dizzy.") Eventually the class would be dismissed as—(1) idiots, (2) a bear garden, (3) a flock of sheep, (4) a pack of numskulls, (5) hissing serpents. The Professor would retire, apparently fuming, to his anteroom, and five minutes afterwards he would be playing himself down the North Bridge on imaginary bagpipes. This sort of thing added a

sauce to all academic sessions. There was a notebook also, which appeared year after year. It contained the Professor's jokes of a former session, carefully classified by an admiring student. It was handed down from one year's men to the next, and thus if Blackie began to make a joke about haggis, the possessor of the book had only swiftly to turn to the H's, find what the joke was, and send it along the class quicker than the Professor could speak it.

In the old days the Greek professor recited a poem in honour of the end of the session. He composed it himself, and, as known to me, it took the form of a graduate's farewell to his Alma Mater. Sometimes he would knock a map down as if overcome with emotion, and at critical moments a student in the back benches would accompany him on a penny trumpet. Now, I believe, the Hellenic Club takes the place of the classroom. All the eminent persons in Edinburgh attend its meetings, and Blackie, the Athenian, is in the chair. The policeman in Douglas Crescent looks skeered when you ask him what takes place on these occasions. It is generally understood that toward the end of the meeting they agree to read Greek next time.

CHAPTER IV

PROFESSOR CALDERWOOD

HERE is a true story that the general reader may jump, as it is intended for Professor Calderwood himself. Some years ago an English daily paper reviewed a book entitled "A Handbook of Moral Philosophy." The Professor knows the work. The "notice" was done by the junior reporter, to whom philosophical treatises are generally entrusted. He dealt leniently, on the whole, with Professor Calderwood, even giving him a word of encouragement here and there. Still the criticism was severe. The reviewer subsequently went to Edinburgh University, and came out 144th in the class of Moral Philosophy.

That student is now, I believe, on friendly terms with Professor Calderwood, but has never told him this story. I fancy the Professor would like to know his name. It may, perhaps, be reached in this way. He was the young gentleman who went to his classes the first day in a black coat and silk hat, and was cheered round the quadrangle by a body of admiring fellow-students, who took him for a professor.

Calderwood contrives to get himself more in touch

with the mass of his students than some of his fellow-professors, partly because he puts a high ideal before himself, and to some extent because his subject is one that Scottish students revel in. Long before they join his class they know that they are moral philosophers; indeed, they are sometimes surer of it before they enrol than afterwards. Their essays begin in some such fashion as this—"In joining issue with Reid, I wish to take no unfair advantage of my antagonist"; or "Kant is sadly at fault when he says that"; or "It is strange that a man of Locke's attainments should have been blind to the fact." When the Professor reads out these tit-bits to the class his eyes twinkle. Some students, of course, are not such keen philosophers as others. Does Professor Calderwood remember the one who was never struck by anything in moral philosophy until he learned by accident that Descartes lay in bed till about twelve o'clock every morning? Then it dawned on him that he, too, must have been a philosopher all his life without knowing it. One year a father and son were in the class. The father got so excited over volition and the line that divides right from wrong, that he wrenched the desk before him from its sockets and hit it triumphantly, meaning that he and the Professor were at one. He was generally admired by his fellow-students, because he was the only one in the class who could cry out "Hear, hear," and even

"question," without blushing. The son, on the other hand, was *blasé,* and would have been an agnostic, only he could never remember the name. Once a week Calderwood turns his class into a debating society, and argues things out with his students. This field-day is a joy to them. Some of them spend the six days previous in preparing posers. The worst of the Professor is that he never sees that they are posers. What is the use of getting up a question of the most subtle kind, when he answers it right away? It makes you sit down quite suddenly. There is an occasional student who tries to convert liberty of speech on the discussion day into license, and of him the Professor makes short work. The student means to turn the laugh on Calderwood, and then Calderwood takes advantage of him, and the other students laugh at the wrong person. It is the older students, as a rule, who are most violently agitated over these philosophical debates. One with a beard cracks his fingers, after the manner of a child in a village school that knows who won the battle of Bannockburn, and feels that he must burst if he does not let it out at once. A bald-headed man rises every minute to put a question, and then sits down, looking stupid. He has been trying so hard to remember what it is, that he has forgotten. There is a legend of two who quarrelled over the Will and fought it out on Arthur's Seat.

One year, however, a boy of sixteen or so, with a squeaky voice and a stammer, was Calderwood's severest critic. He sat on the back bench, and what he wanted to know was something about the infinite. Every discussion day he took advantage of a lull in the debate to squeak out, "With regard to the infinite," and then could never get any further. No one ever discovered what he wanted enlightenment on about the infinite. He grew despondent as the session wore on, but courageously stuck to his point. Probably he is a soured man now. For purposes of exposition Calderwood has a black board in his lecture-room, on which he chalks circles that represent the feelings and the will, with arrows shooting between them. In my class there was a boy, a very little boy, who had been a dux at school and was a dunce at college. He could not make moral philosophy out at all, but did his best. Here were his complete notes for one day:—"Edinburgh University, class of Moral Philosophy, Professor Calderwood, Lecture 64, Jan. 11, 18—. You rub out the arrow, and there is only the circle left."

Professor Calderwood is passionately fond of music, as those who visit at his house know. He is of opinion that there is a great deal of moral philosophy in "The Dead March in Saul." Once he said something to that effect in his class, adding enthusiastically that he could excuse the absence of a student

who had been away hearing "The Dead March in Saul." After that he received a good many letters from students, worded in this way: "Mr. McNaughton (bench 7) presents his compliments to Professor Calderwood, and begs to state that his absence from the class yesterday was owing to his being elsewhere, hearing 'The Dead March in Saul.'" "Dear Professor Calderwood—I regret my absence from the lecture to-day, but hope you will overlook it, as I was unavoidably detained at home, practising 'The Dead March in Saul.'—Yours truly, PETER WEBSTER." "Professor Calderwood,—Dear Sir,—As I was coming to the lecture to-day, I heard 'The Dead March in Saul' being played in the street. You will, I am sure, make allowance for my non-attendance at the class, as I was too much affected to come. It is indeed a grand march.—Yours faithfully, JOHN ROBBIE." "The students whose names are subjoined thank the Professor of Moral Philosophy most cordially for his remarks on the elevating power of music. They have been encouraged thereby to start a class for the proper study of the impressive and solemn march to which he called special attention, and hope he will excuse them, should their practisings occasionally prevent their attendance at the Friday lectures." Professor Calderwood does not lecture on "The Dead March in Saul" now.

The class of Moral Philosophy is not for the few,

but the many. Some professors do not mind what becomes of the nine students, so long as they can force on every tenth. Calderwood, however, considers it his duty to carry the whole class along with him, and it is, as a consequence, almost impossible to fall behind. The lectures are not delivered, in the ordinary sense, but dictated. Having explained the subject of the day with the lucidity that is this Professor's peculiar gift, he condenses his remarks into a proposition. It is as if a minister ended his sermon with the text. Thus:—"Proposition 34. Man is born into the world—(You have got that? See that you have all got it.) Man is born into the world with a capacity—with a capacity—" (Anxious student: "If you please, Professor, where did you say man was born into?") "Into the world, with a capacity to distinguish"—("With a what, sir?")—"with a capacity to distinguish"—(Student: "Who is born into the world?") "Perhaps I have been reading too quickly. Man is born into the world with a capacity to distinguish between—distinguish between (student shuts his book, thinking that completes the proposition)—distinguish between right and wrong—right—and wrong. You have all got Proposition 34, gentlemen?"

Once Calderwood was questioning a student about a proposition to see that he thoroughly understood it. "Give an illustration," suggested the Professor.

The student took the case of a murderer. "Very good," said the Professor. "Now give me another illustration." The student pondered for a little. "Well," he said at length, "take the case of another murderer."

Professor Calderwood has such an exceptional interest in his students that he asks every one of them to his house. This is but one of many things that make him generally popular; he also invites his ladies' class to meet them. The lady whom you take down to supper suggests Proposition 41 as a nice thing to talk about, and asks what you think of the metaphysics of ethics. Professor Calderwood sees the ladies into the cabs himself. It is the only thing I ever heard against him.

CHAPTER V

PROFESSOR TAIT

Just as I opened my desk to write enthusiastically of Tait, I remembered having recently deciphered a pencil note about him, in my own handwriting, on the cover of Masson's "Chronological List," which I still keep by me. I turned to the note to see if there was life in it yet. "Walls," it says, "got 2s. for T. and T. at Brown's, 16, Walker-street." I don't recall Walls, but T. and T. was short for "Thomson and Tait's Elements of Natural Philosophy" (Elements!), better known in my year as the "Student's First Glimpse of Hades." Evidently Walls sold his copy, but why did I take such note of the address? I fear T. and T. is one of the Books Which Have Helped Me. This somewhat damps my ardour.

When Tait was at Cambridge it was flung in the face of the mathematicians that they never stood high in Scriptural knowledge. Tait and another were the two of whom one must be first wrangler, and they agreed privately to wipe this stigma from mathematics. They did it by taking year about the

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prize which was said to hang out of their reach. It is always interesting to know of professors who have done well in Biblical knowledge. All Scottish students at the English Universities are not so successful. I knew a Snell man who was sent back from the Oxford entrance exam., and he always held himself that the Biblical questions had done it.

Turner is said by medicals to be the finest lecturer in the University. He will never be that so long as Tait is in the Natural Philosophy chair. Never, I think, can there have been a more superb demonstrator. I have his burly figure before me. The small twinkling eyes had a fascinating gleam in them; he could concentrate them until they held the object looked at; when they flashed round the room he seemed to have drawn a rapier. I have seen a man fall back in alarm under Tait's eyes, though there were a dozen benches between them. These eyes could be merry as a boy's, though, as when he turned a tube of water on students who would insist on crowding too near an experiment, for Tait's was the humor of high spirits. I could conceive him at marbles still, and feeling annoyed at defeat. He could not fancy anything much funnier than a man missing his chair. Outside his own subject he is not, one feels, a six-footer. When Mr. R. L. Stevenson's memoir of the late Mr. Fleeming Jenkin was published, Tait said at great length that he did not like

it; he would have had the sketch by a scientific man. But though scientists may be the only men nowadays who have anything to say, they are also the only men who can't say it. Scientific men out of their sphere know for a fact that novels are not true, so they draw back from novelists who write biography. Professor Tait and Mr. Stevenson are both men of note, who walk different ways, and when they meet neither likes to take the curbstone. If they were tied together for life in a three-legged race, which would suffer the more?

But if Tait's science weighs him to the earth, he has a genius for sticking to his subject, and I am lost in admiration every time I bring back his lectures. It comes as natural to his old students to say when they meet, "What a lecturer Tait was!" as to Englishmen to joke about the bagpipes. It is not possible to draw a perfect circle, Chrystal used to say, after drawing a very fine one. To the same extent it was not possible for Tait never to fail in his experiments. The atmosphere would be too much for him once in a session, or there were other hostile influences at work. Tait warned us of these before proceeding to experiment, but we merely smiled. We believed in him as though he were a Bradshaw announcing that he would not be held responsible for possible errors.

I had forgotten Lindsay; "the mother may forget her child." As I write he has slipped back into his

chair on the Professor's right, and I could photograph him now in his brown suit. Lindsay was the imperturbable man who assisted Tait in his experiments, and his father held the post before him. When there were many of us together, we could applaud Lindsay with burlesque exaggeration, and he treated us good-humouredly, as making something considerable between us. But I once had to face Lindsay alone, in quest of my certificate; and suddenly he towered above me, as a waiter may grow tall when you find that you have not money enough to pay the bill. He treated me most kindly; did not reply, of course, but got the certificate, and handed it to me as a cashier contemptuously shovels you your pile of gold. Long ago I pasted up a crack in my window with the certificate, but it said, I remember, that I had behaved respectably—so far as I had come under the eyes of the Professor. Tait was always an enthusiast.

We have been keeping Lindsay waiting. When he had nothing special to do he sat indifferently in his chair, with the face of a precentor after the sermon has begun. But though it was not very likely that Lindsay would pay much attention to talk about such playthings as the laws of Nature, his fingers went out in the direction of the Professor when the experiments began. Then he was not the precentor; he was a minister in one of the pews. Lindsay was

an inscrutable man, and I shall not dare to say that he even half-wished to see Tait fail. He only looked on, ready for any emergency; but if the experiment would not come off, he was as quick to go to the Professor's assistance as a member of Parliament is to begin when he has caught the Speaker's eye. Perhaps Tait would have none of his aid, or pushed the mechanism for the experiment from him—an intimation to Lindsay to carry it quickly to the anteroom. Do you think Lindsay read the instructions so? Let me tell you that your mind fails to seize hold of Lindsay. He marched the machine out of Tait's vicinity as a mother may push her erring boy away from his father's arms, to take him to her heart as soon as the door is closed. Lindsay took the machine to his seat, and laid it before him on the desk with well-concealed apathy. Tait would flash his eye to the right to see what Lindsay was after, and there was Lindsay sitting with his arms folded. The Professor's lecture resumed its way, and then out went Lindsay's hands to the machine. Here he tried a wheel; again he turned a screw; in time he had the machine ready for another trial. No one was looking his way, when suddenly there was a whizz—bang, bang. All eyes were turned upon Lindsay, the Professor's among them. A cheer broke out as we realized that Lindsay had done the experiment. Was he flushed with triumph? Not a bit of it; he was

again sitting with his arms folded. A Glasgow merchant of modest manners, when cross-examined in a law court, stated that he had a considerable monetary interest in a certain concern. "How much do you mean by a 'considerable monetary interest'?" demanded the contemptuous barrister who was cross-examining him. "Oh," said the witness, humbly, "a maiter o' a million an' a half—or, say, twa million." That Glasgow man in the witness-box is the only person I can think of when looking about me for a parallel to Lindsay. While the Professor eyed him and the students deliriously beat the floor, Lindsay quietly gathered the mechanism together and carried it to the ante-room. His head was not flung back nor his chest forward, like one who walked to music. In his hour of triumph he was still imperturbable. I lie back in my chair to-day, after the lapse of years, and ask myself again, How did Lindsay behave after he entered the ante-room, shutting the door behind him? Did he give way? There is no one to say. When he returned to the classroom he wore his familiar face; a man to ponder over.

There is a legend about the Natural Philosophy classroom—the period long antecedent to Tait. The Professor, annoyed by a habit students had got into of leaving their hats on his desk, announced that the next hat placed there would be cut in pieces by him in presence of the class. The warning had its effect,

until one day when the Professor was called for a few minutes from the room. An undergraduate, to whom the natural sciences, unrelieved, were a monotonous study, slipped into the ante-room, from which he emerged with the Professor's hat. This he placed on the desk, and then stole in a panic to his seat. An awe fell upon the class. The Professor returned, but when he saw the hat he stopped. He showed no anger. "Gentlemen," he said, "I told you what would happen if you again disobeyed my orders." Quite blandly he took a pen-knife from his pocket, slit the hat into several pieces, and flung them into the sink. While the hat was under the knife the students forgot to demonstrate, but as it splashed into the sink they gave forth a true British cheer. The end.

Close to the door of the Natural Philosophy room is a window that in my memory will ever be sacred to a janitor. The janitors of the University were of varied interest, from the merry one who treated us as if we were his equals, and the soldier who sometimes looked as if he would like to mow us down, to the Head Man of All, whose name I dare not write, though I can whisper it. The janitor at the window, however, sat there through the long evenings while the Debating Society (of which I was a member) looked after affairs of State in an adjoining room. We were the smallest society in the University and

the longest-winded, and I was once nearly expelled for not paying my subscription. Our grand debate was, "Is the policy of the Government worthy the confidence of this Society?" and we also read about six essays yearly on "The Genius of Robert Burns"; but it was on private business that we came out strongest. The question that agitated us most was whether the meetings should be opened with prayer, and the men who thought they should would not so much as look at the men who thought they should not. When the janitor was told that we had begun our private business he returned to his window and slept. His great day was when we could not form a quorum, which happened now and then.

Gregory was a member of that society: what has become of Gregory? He was one of those men who professors say have a brilliant future before them, and who have not since been heard of. Morton, another member, was of a different stamp. He led in the debate on "Beauty of the Mind *v.* Beauty of the Body." His writhing contempt for the beauty that is only skin deep is not to be forgotten. How noble were his rhapsodies on the beauty of the mind! And when he went to Calderwood's to supper, how quick he was to pick out the prettiest girl, who took ten per cent. in Moral Philosophy, and to sit beside her all the evening. Morton had a way of calling on his friends the night before a degree examination to ask

them to put him up to as much as would pull him through.

Tait used to get greatly excited over the rectorial elections, and if he could have disguised himself, would have liked, I think, to join in the fight round the Brewster statue. He would have bled for the Conservative cause, as his utterances on University reform have shown. The reformers have some cause for thinking that Tait is a greater man in his class-room than when he addresses the graduates. He has said that the less his students know of his subject when they join his class, the less, probably, they will have to unlearn. Such views are behind the times that feed their children on geographical biscuits in educational nurseries with astronomical ceilings and historical wall-papers.

CHAPTER VI

PROFESSOR CAMPBELL FRASER

Not long ago I was back in the Old University —how well I remember pointing it out as the gaol to a stranger who had asked me to show him round. I was in one of the library anterooms, when some one knocked, and I looked up, to see Campbell Fraser framed in the doorway. I had not looked on that venerable figure for half a dozen years. I had forgotten all my metaphysics. Yet it all came back with a rush. I was on my feet, wondering if I existed strictly so-called.

Calderwood and Fraser had both their followings. The moral philosophers wore an air of certainty, for they knew that if they stuck to Calderwood he would pull them through. You cannot lose yourself in the back-garden. But the metaphysicians had their doubts. Fraser led them into strange places, and said he would meet them there again next day. They wandered to their lodgings, and got into difficulties with their landlady for saying that she was only an aggregate of sense phenomena. Fraser was rather a hazardous cure for weak intellects. Young men

whose anchor had been certainty of themselves went into that class floating buoyantly on the sea of facts, and came out all adrift—on the sea of theory—in an open boat—rudderless—one oar—the boat scuttled. How could they think there was any chance for them, when the Professor was not even sure of himself? I see him rising in a daze from his chair and putting his hands through his hair. "Do I exist," he said, thoughtfully, "strictly so-called?" The students (if it was the beginning of the session) looked a little startled. This was a matter that had not previously disturbed them. Still, if the Professor was in doubt, there must be something in it. He began to argue it out, and an uncomfortable silence held the room in awe. If he did not exist, the chances were that they did not exist either. It was thus a personal question. The Professor glanced round slowly for an illustration. "Am I a table?" A pained look travelled over the class. Was it just possible that they were all tables? It is no wonder that the students who do not go to the bottom during their first month of metaphysics begin to give themselves airs strictly so-called. In the privacy of their room at the top of the house they pinch themselves to see if they are still there.

He would, I think, be a sorry creature who did not find something to admire in Campbell Fraser. Metaphysics may not trouble you, as it troubles him,

but you do not sit under the man without seeing his transparent honesty and feeling that he is genuine. In appearance and in habit of thought he is an ideal philosopher, and his communings with himself have lifted him to a level of serenity that is worth struggling for. Of all the arts professors in Edinburgh he is probably the most difficult to understand, and students in a hurry have called his lectures childish. If so, it may be all the better for them. For the first half of the hour, they say, he tells you what he is going to do, and for the second half he revises. Certainly he is vastly explanatory, but then he is not so young as they are, and so he has his doubts. They are so cock-sure that they wonder to see him hesitate. Often there is a mist on the mountain when it is all clear in the valley.

Fraser's great work is his edition of Berkeley, a labour of love that should live after him. He has two Berkeleys, the large one and the little one, and, to do him justice, it was the little one he advised us to consult. I never read the large one myself, which is in a number of monster tomes, but I often had a look at it in the library, and I was proud to think that an Edinburgh professor was the editor. When Glasgow men came through to talk of their professors we showed them the big Berkeley, and after that they were reasonable. There was one man in my year who really began the large Berkeley, but

after a time he was missing, and it is believed that some day he will be found flattened between the pages of the first volume.

The "Selections" was the text-book we used in the class. It is sufficient to prove that Berkeley wrote beautiful English. I am not sure that any one has written such English since. We have our own "stylists," but how self-conscious they are after Berkeley. It is seven years since I opened my "Selections," but I see that I was once more of a metaphysician than I have been giving myself credit for. The book is scribbled over with posers in my handwriting about dualism and primary realities. Some of the comments are in shorthand, which I must at one time have been able to read, but all are equally unintelligible now. Here is one of my puzzlers:—"Does B here mean impercipient and unperceived subject or conscious and percipient subject?" Observe the friendly B. I daresay farther on I shall find myself referring to the Professor as F. I wonder if I ever discovered what B meant. I could not now tell what I meant myself.

As many persons are aware, the "Selections" consist of Berkeley's text with the Professor's notes thereon. The notes are explanatory of the text, and the student must find them an immense help. Here, for instance, is a note:—"Phenomenal or sense dependent existence can be substantiated and caused

only by a self-conscious spirit, for otherwise there could be no propositions about it expressive of what is conceivable; on the other hand, to affirm that phenomenal or sense dependent existence, which alone we know, and which alone is conceivable, is, or even represents, an inconceivable non-phenomenal or abstract existence, would be to affirm a contradiction in terms." There we have it.

As a metaphysician I was something of a disappointment. I began well, standing, if I recollect aright, in the three examinations, first, seventeenth, and seventy-seventh. A man who sat beside me—man was the word we used—gazed at me reverently when I came out first, and I could see by his eye that he was not sure whether I existed properly so-called. By the second exam. his doubts had gone, and by the third he was surer of me than of himself. He came out fifty-seventh, this being the grand triumph of his college course. He was the same whose key translated *cras donaberis haedo* "To-morrow you will be presented with a kid," but who, thinking that a little vulgar, refined it down to "To-morrow you will be presented with a small child."

In the metaphysics class I was like the fountains in the quadrangle, which ran dry toward the middle of the session. While things were still looking hopeful for me, I had an invitation to breakfast with the Professor. If the fates had been so propitious as to

forward me that invitation, it is possible that I might be a metaphysician to this day, but I had changed my lodgings, and when I heard of the affair, all was over. The Professor asked me to stay behind one day after the lecture, and told me that he had got his note back with "Left: no address," on it. "However," he said, "you may keep this," presenting me with the invitation for the Saturday previously. I mention this to show that even professors have hearts. That letter is preserved with the autographs of three editors, none of which anybody can read.

There was once a medical student who came up to my rooms early in the session, and I proved to him in half an hour that he did not exist. He got quite frightened, and I can still see his white face as he sat staring at me in the gloaming. This shows what metaphysics can do. He has recovered, however, and is sheep-farming now, his examiners never having asked him the right questions.

The last time Fraser ever addressed me was when I was capped. He said, "I congratulate you, Mr. Smith": and one of the other professors said, "I congratulate you, Mr. Fisher." My name is neither Smith nor Fisher, but no doubt the thing was kindly meant. It was then, however, that the professor of metaphysics had his revenge on me. I had once spelt Fraser with a "z."

CHAPTER VII

PROFESSOR CHRYSTAL

WHEN Chrystal came to Edinburgh he rooted up the humours of the classroom as a dentist draws teeth. Souls were sold for keys that could be carried in the waistcoat pocket. Ambition fell from heights, and lay with its eye on a certificate. By night was a rush of ghosts, shrieking for passes. Horse play fled before the Differential Calculus in spectacles.

I had Chrystal's first year, and recall the gloomy student sitting before me who hacked "All hope abandon ye who enter here" into a desk that may have confined Carlyle. It took him a session, and he was digging his own grave, for he never got through; but it was something to hold by, something he felt sure of. All else was spiders' webs in chalk.

Chrystal was a fine hare for the hounds who could keep up with him. He started off the first day with such a spurt that most of us were left behind mopping our faces, and saying, "Here's a fellow," which is what Mr. Stevenson says Shakespeare would have remarked about Mr. George Meredith. We never saw him again. The men who were on speaking acquaintance with his symbols revelled in him as stu-

dents love an enthusiast who is eager to lead them into a world toward which they would journey. He was a rare guide for them. The bulk, however, lost him in labyrinths. They could not but admire their brilliant professor; but while their friend the medalist and he kept the conversation to themselves, they felt like eavesdroppers hearkening to a pair of lovers. "It is beautiful," they cried, "but this is no place for us; let us away."

A good many went, but their truancy stuck in their throats like Otway's last roll. The M. A. was before them. They had fancied it in their hands, but it became shy as a maiden from the day they learned Chrystal's heresy that Euclid is not mathematics but only some riders in it. This snapped the cord that had tied the blind man to his dog, and the M. A. shot down the horizon. When Rutherford delivered his first lecture in the chair of Institutes of Medicine, boisterous students drowned his voice, and he flung out of the room. At the door he paused to say, "Gentlemen, we shall meet again at Philippi." A dire bomb was this in the midst of them, warranted to go off, none able to cast it overboard. We, too, had our Philippi before us. Chrystal could not be left to his own devices.

I had never a passion for knowing that when circles or triangles attempt impossibilities it is absurd; and x was an unknown quantity I was ever content

to walk round about. To admit to Chrystal that we understood *x* was only a way he had of leading you on to *y* and *z*. I gave him his chance, however, by contributing a paper of answers to his first weekly set of exercises. When the hour for returning the slips came round, I was there to accept fame—if so it was to be—with modesty; and if it was to be humiliation, still to smile. The Professor said there was one paper, with an owner's name on it, which he could not read, and it was handed along the class to be deciphered. My presentiment that it was mine became a certainty when it reached my hand; but I passed it on pleasantly, and it returned to Chrystal, a Japhet that never found its father. Feeling that the powers were against me, I then retired from the conflict, sanguine that the teaching of my mathematical schoolmaster, the best that could be, would pull me through. The Disowned may be going the round of the classroom still.

The men who did not know when they were beaten returned to their seats, and doggedly took notes, their faces lengthening daily. Their notebooks reproduced exactly the hieroglyphics of the blackboard, and, examined at night, were as suggestive as the photographs of persons one has never seen. To overtake Chrystal after giving him a start was the presumption that is an offshoot from despair. There was once an elderly gentleman who for years

read the *Times* every day from the first page to the last. For a fortnight he was ill of a fever; but, on recovering, he began at the copy of the *Times* where he had left off. He struggled magnificently to make up on the *Times,* but it was in vain. This is an allegory for the way these students panted after Chrystal.

Some succumbed and joined the majority—literally; for to mathematics they were dead. I never hear of the old University now, nor pass under the shadow of the walls one loves when he is done with them, without seeing myself as I was the day I matriculated, an awestruck boy, passing and repassing the gates, frightened to venture inside, breathing heavily at sight of janitors, Scott and Carlyle in the air. After that I see nothing fuller of colour than the meetings that were held outside Chrystal's door. Adjoining it is a classroom so little sought for, that legend tells of its door once showing the notice: "There will be no class to-day as the student is unwell." The crowd round Chrystal's could have filled that room. It was composed of students hearkening at the door to see whether he was to call their part of the roll to-day. If he did, they slunk in; if not, the crowd melted into the streets, this refrain in their ears—

> "I'm plucked, I do admit,
> I'm spun, my mother dear,
> Yet do not grieve for that
> Which happens every year.

I've waited very patiently,
I may have long to wait,
But you've another son, mother,
And he will graduate."

A professor of mathematics once brought a rowdy student from the back benches to a seat beside him, because—"First, you'll be near the board; second, you'll be near me; and, third, you'll be near the door." Chrystal soon discovered that students could be too near the door, and he took to calling the roll in the middle of the hour, which insured an increased attendance. It was a silent class, nothing heard but the patter of pencils, rats scraping for grain, of which there was abundance, but not one digestion in a bench. To smuggle in a novel up one's waistcoat was perilous, Chrystal's spectacles doing their work. At a corner of the platform sat the assistant, with a constable's authority, but not formed for swooping, uneasy because he had legs, and where to put them he knew not. He got through the hour by shifting his position every five minutes; and, sitting there waiting, he reminded one of the boy who, on being told to remain so quietly where he was that he could hear a pin drop, held his breath a moment, then shouted, "Let it drop!" An excellent fellow was this assistant, who told us that one of his predecessors had got three months.

A jest went as far in that class as a plum in the

midshipmen's pudding, and, you remember, when the middies came on a plum they gave three cheers. In the middle of some brilliant reasoning Chrystal would stop to add 4, 7, and 11. Addition of this kind was the only thing he could not do, and he looked to the class for help—"20," they shouted, "24," "17," while he thought it over. These appeals to their intelligence made them beam. They woke up as a sleepy congregation shakes itself into life when the minister says, "I remember when I was a little boy. . . ."

The daring spirits—say, those who were going into their father's office, and so did not look upon Chrystal as a door locked to their advancement—sought to bring sunshine into the room. Chrystal soon had the blind down on that. I hear they have been at it recently with the usual result. To relieve the monotony, a student at the end of bench ten dropped a marble, which toppled slowly downward toward the Professor. At every step it took there was a smothered guffaw; but Chrystal, who was working at the board, did not turn his head. When the marble reached the floor, he said, still with his back to the class, "Will the student at the end of bench ten, who dropped that marble, stand up?" All eyes dilated. He had counted the falls of the marble from step to step. Mathematics do not obscure the intellect.

Twenty per cent. was a good percentage in Chrystal's examinations; thirty sent you away whistling. As the M. A. drew nigh, students on their prospects might have been farmers discussing the weather. Some put their faith in the Professor's goodness of heart, of which symptoms had been showing. He would not, all at once, "raise the standard"—hated phrase until you are through, when you write to the papers advocating it. Courage! was it not told of the Glasgow Snell competition that one of the competitors, as soon as he saw the first paper, looked for his hat and the door, that he was forbidden to withdraw until an hour had elapsed, and that he then tackled the paper and ultimately carried off the Snell? Of more immediate interest, perhaps, was the story of the quaking student, whose neighbour handed him in pencil, beneath the desk, the answer to several questions. It was in an M. A. exam., and the affrighted student found that he could not read his neighbour's notes. Trusting to fortune, he enclosed them with his own answers, writing at the top, "No time to write these out in ink, so enclose them in pencil." He got through: no moral.

A condemned criminal wondering if he is to get a reprieve will not feel the position novel, if he has loitered in a University quadrangle waiting for the janitor to nail up the results of a degree exam. A queer gathering we were, awaiting the verdict of

Chrystal. Some compressed their lips, others were lively as fireworks dipped in water; there were those who rushed round and round the quadrangle; only one went the length of saying that he did not want to pass. H. I shall call him. I met him the other day in Fleet Street, and he annoyed me by asking me at once if I remembered the landlady I quarrelled with because she wore my socks to church of a Sunday: we found her out one wet forenoon. H. waited the issue with a cigar in his mouth. He had purposely, he explained, given in a bad paper. He could not understand why men were so anxious to get through. He had ten reasons for wishing to be plucked. We let him talk. The janitor appeared with the fateful paper, and we lashed about him like waves round a lighthouse, all but H., who strolled languidly to the board to which the paper was being fastened. A moment afterwards I heard a shriek, "I'm through! I'm through!" It was H. His cigar was dashed aside, and he sped like an arrow from the bow to the nearest telegraph office, shouting "I'm through!" as he ran.

Those of us who had H.'s fortune now consider Chrystal made to order for his chair, but he has never, perhaps, had a proper appreciation of the charming fellows who get ten per cent.

CHAPTER VIII

PROFESSOR SELLAR

When one of the distinguished hunting ladies who chase celebrities captured Mr. Mark Pattison, he gave anxious consideration to the quotation which he was asked to write above his name. "Fancy," he said with a shudder, "going down to posterity arm in arm with *carpe diem!*" Remembering this, I forbear tying Sellar to *odi profanum vulgus.* Yet the name opens the door to the quotation.

Sellar is a Roman senator. He stood very high at Oxford, and took a prize for boxing. If you watch him in the class, you will sometimes see his mind murmuring that Edinburgh students do not take their play like Oxford men. The difference is in manner. A courteous fellow-student of Sellar once showed his relatives over Balliol. "You have now, I think," he said at last, "seen everything of interest except the Master." He flung a stone at a window, at which the Master's head appeared immediately, menacing, wrathful. "And now," concluded the polite youth, "you have seen him also."

Mr. James Payn, who never forgave the Scottish people for pulling down their blinds on Sundays, was annoyed by the halo they have woven around the name "Professor." He knew an Edinburgh lady who was scandalized because that mere poet, Alexander Smith, coolly addressed professors by their surnames. Mr. Payn might have known what it is to walk in the shadow of a Senatus Academicus, could he have met such specimens as Sellar, Fraser, Tait, and Sir Alexander Grant marching down the Bridges abreast. I have seen them: an inspiriting sight. The pavement only held three. You could have shaken hands with them from an upper window.

Sellar's treatment of his students was always that of a fine gentleman. Few got near him; all respected him. At times he was addressed in an unknown tongue, but he kept his countenance. He was particular about students keeping to their proper benches, and once thought he had caught a swarthy north countryman straying. "You are in your wrong seat, Mr. Orr." "Na, am richt eneuch." "You should be in the seat in front. That is bench 12, and you are entered on bench 10." "Eh? This is no bench twal, (counting) twa, fower, sax, aucht, ten." "There is something wrong." "Oh-h-h (with sudden enlightenment) ye've been coontin' the first dask; we dinna coont the first dask." The Professor

knew the men he had to deal with too well to scorn this one, who turned out to be a fine fellow. He was the only man I ever knew who ran his medical and arts classes together, and so many lectures had he to attend daily that he mixed them up. He graduated, however, in both faculties in five years, and the last I heard of him was that, when applying for a medical assistantship, he sent his father's photograph because he did not have one of himself. He was a man of brains as well as sinew, and dined briskly on a shilling a week.

There was a little fellow in the class who was a puzzle to Sellar, because he was higher sitting than standing: when the Professor asked him to stand up, he stood down. "Is Mr. Blank not present?" Sellar would ask. "Here, sir," cried Blank. "Then, will you stand up, Mr. Blank?" (Agony of Blank, and a demonstration of many feet.) "Are you not prepared, Mr. Blank?" "Yes, sir; *Pastor quum traheret*—" "I insist on your standing up, Mr. Blank." (Several students rise to their feet to explain, but subside.) "Yes, sir; *Pastor quum traheret per*—" "I shall mark you 'not prepared,' Mr. Blank." (Further demonstration, and then an indignant squeak from Blank.) "If you please, sir, I am standing." "But, in that case, how is it—? Ah, oh, ah, yes; proceed, Mr. Blank." As one man was only called upon for exhibition five or six times in a year, the Pro-

fessor had always forgotten the circumstances when he asked Blank to stand up again. Blank was looked upon by his fellow-students as a practical jest, and his name was always received with the prolonged applause which greets the end of an after-dinner speech.

Sellar never showed resentment to the students who addressed him as Professor Sellars.

One day the Professor was giving out some English to be translated into Latin prose. He read on—"and fiercely lifting the axe with both hands—" when a cheer from the top bench made him pause. The cheer spread over the room like an uncorked gas. Sellar frowned, but proceeded—"lifting the axe—," when again the class became demented. "What does this mean?" he demanded, looking as if he, too, could lift the axe. "Axe!" shouted a student in explanation. Still Sellar could not solve the riddle. Another student rose to his assistance. "Axe —Gladstone!" he cried. Sellar sat back in his chair. "Really, gentlemen," he said, "I take the most elaborate precautions against touching upon politics in this class, but sometimes you are beyond me. Let us continue—and fiercely lifting his weapon with both hands—.' "

The duxes from the schools suffered a little during their first year, from a feeling that they and Sellar understood each other. He liked to undeceive

them. We had one, all head, who went about wondering at himself. He lost his bursary on the way home with it, and still he strutted. Sellar asked if we saw anything peculiar in a certain line from Horace. We did not. We were accustomed to trust to Horace's reputation, all but the dandy. "Eh—ah! Professor," he lisped; "it ought to have been so and so." Sellar looked at this promising plant from the schools, and watered him without a rose on the pan. "Depend upon it, Mr.—; ah, I did not catch your name, if it ought to have been so and so, Horace would have made it so and so."

Sellar's face was proof against sudden wit. It did not relax till he gave it liberty. You could never tell from it what was going on inside. He read without a twitch a notice on his door: "Found in this class a gold-headed pencil case; if not claimed within three days will be sold to defray expenses." He even withstood the battering ram on the day of the publication of his "Augustan Poets." The students could not let this opportunity pass. They assailed him with frantic applause—every bench was a drum to thump upon. His countenance said nothing. The drums had it in the end, though, and he dismissed the class with what is believed to have verged on a smile. Like the lover who has got his lady's glance, they at once tried for more, but no.

Most of us had Humanity our first year, which is

the year for experimenting. Then is the time to join the University library. The pound, which makes you a member, has never had its poet. You can withdraw your pound when you please. There are far-seeing men who work the whole thing out by mathematics. Put simply, this is the notion. In the beginning of the session you join the library, and soon you forget about your pound; you reckon without it. As the winter closes in, and the coal-bunk empties; or you find that five shillings a week for lodgings is a dream that cannot be kept up; or your coat assumes more and more the colour identified with spring; or you would feast your friends for once right gloriously; or next Wednesday is your little sister's birthday; you cower, despairing, over a sulky fire. Suddenly you are on your feet, all aglow once more. What is this thought that sends the blood to your head? That library pound! You had forgotten that you had a bank. Next morning you are at the university in time to help the library door to open. You ask for your pound; you get it. Your hand mounts guard over the pocket in which it rustles. So they say. I took their advice and paid in my money; then waited exultingly to forget about it. In vain. I always allowed for that pound in my thoughts. I saw it as plainly, I knew its every feature as a schoolboy remembers his first trout. Not to be hasty, I gave my pound two months, and then brought it home

again. I had a fellow-student who lived across the way from me. We railed at the library pound theory at open windows over the life of the street; a beautiful dream, but mad, mad.

He was an enthusiast, and therefore happy, whom I have seen in the Humanity classroom on an examination day, his pen racing with time, himself seated in the contents of an ink-bottle. Some stories of exams. have even a blacker ending. I write in tears of him who, estimating his memory as a leaky vessel, did with care and forethought draw up a crib that was more condensed than a pocket cyclopædia, a very Liebig's essence of the classics, tinned meat for students in the eleventh hour. Bridegrooms have been known to forget the ring; this student forgot his crib. In the middle of the examination came a nervous knocking at the door. A lady wanted to see the Professor at once. The student looked up, to see his mother handing the Professor his crib. Her son had forgotten it; she was sure that it was important, so she had brought it herself.

Jump the body of this poor victim. There was no M. A. for him that year; but in our gowns and sashes we could not mourn for a might-have-been. Soldiers talk of the Victoria Cross, statesmen of the Cabinet, ladies of a pearl set in diamonds. These are pretty baubles, but who has thrilled as the student that with bumping heart strolls into Middlemass's to order his

graduate's gown. He hires it—five shillings—but the photograph to follow makes it as good as his for life. Look at him, young ladies, as he struts to the Synod Hall to have M. A. tacked to his name. Dogs do not dare bark at him. His gait is springy; in Princes Street he is as one who walks upstairs. Gone to me are those student days for ever, but I can still put a photograph before me of a ghost in gown and cape, the hair straggling under the cap as tobacco may straggle over the side of a tin when there is difficulty in squeezing down the lid. How well the little black jacket looks, how vividly the wearer remembers putting it on. He should have worn a dress-coat, but he had none. The little jacket resembled one with the tails off, and, as he artfully donned his gown, he backed against the wall so that no one might know.

To turn up the light on old college days is not always the signal for the dance. You are back in the dusty little lodging, with its battered sofa, its slippery tablecloth, the prim array of books, the picture of the death of Nelson, the peeling walls, the broken clock; you are again in the quadrangle with him who has been dead this many a year. There are tragedies in a college course. Dr. Walter Smith has told in a poem mentioned elsewhere of the brilliant scholar who forgot his dominie; some, alas! forget their mother. There are men—I know it—who go

mad from loneliness; and medalists ere now have crept home to die. The capping-day was the end of our spring-tide, and for some of us the summer was to be brief. Sir Alexander, gone into the night since then, flung "I mekemae" at us as we trooped past him, all in bud, some small flower to blossom in time, let us hope, here and there.

CHAPTER IX

MR. JOSEPH THOMSON

Two years hence Joseph Thomson's reputation will be a decade old, though he is at present only thirty years of age. When you meet him for the first time you conclude that he must be the explorer's son. His identity, however, can always be proved by simply mentioning Africa in his presence. Then he draws himself up, and his eyes glisten, and he is thinking how glorious it would be to be in the Masai country again, living on meat so diseased that it crumbled in the hand like shortbread.

Gatelaw-bridge Quarry, in Dumfriesshire, is famous for Old Mortality and Thomson, the latter (when he is at the head of a caravan) being as hard-headed as if he had been cut out of it. He went to school at Thornhill, where he spent great part of his time in reading novels, and then he matriculated at Edinburgh University, where he began to accumulate medals. Geology and kindred studies were his favourites there. One day he heard that Keith Johnston, then on the point of starting for Africa, wanted

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a lieutenant. Thomson was at that time equally in need of a Keith Johnston, and everybody who knew him saw that the opening and he were made for each other. Keith Johnston and Thomson went out together, and Johnston died in the jungle. This made a man in an hour of a stripling. Most youths in Thomson's position at that turning point of his career would have thought it judicious to turn back, and in geographical circles it would have been considered highly creditable had he brought his caravan to the coast intact. Thomson, however, pushed on, and did everything that his dead leader had hoped to do. From that time his career has been followed by every one interested in African exploration, and by his countrymen with some pride in addition. When an expedition was organized for the relief of Emin Pasha, there was for a time some probability of Thomson's having the command. He and Stanley differed as to the routes that should be taken, and subsequent events have proved that Thomson's was the proper one.

Thomson came over from Paris at that time to consult with the authorities, and took up his residence in the most over-grown hotel in London. His friends here organized an expedition for his relief. They wandered up and down the endless stairs looking for him, till, had they not wanted to make themselves a name, they would have beaten a retreat. He

also wandered about looking for them, and at last they met. The leader of the party, restraining his emotion, lifted his hat, and said, "Mr. Thomson, I presume?" This is how I found Thomson.

The explorer had been for some months in Paris at that time, and France did him the honour of translating his "Through Masailand" into French. In this book there is a picture of a buffalo tossing Thomson in the air. This was after he had put several bullets into it, and in the sketch he is represented some ten feet from the ground, with his gun flying one way and his cap another. "It was just as if I were distributing largess to the natives," the traveller says now, though this idea does not seem to have struck him at the time. He showed the sketch to a Parisian lady, who looked at it long and earnestly. "Ah, M. Thomson," she said at length, "but how could you pose like that?"

Like a good many other travellers, including Mr. Du Chaillu, who says he is a dear boy, Thomson does not smoke. Stanley, however, smokes very strong cigars, as those who have been in his sumptuous chambers in Bond Street can testify. All the three happen to be bachelors, though; because, one of them says, after returning from years of lonely travel, a man has such a delight in female society that to pick and choose would be invidious. Yet they have had their chance. An African race once tried to bribe

Mr. Du Chaillu with a kingdom and over eight hundred wives,—"the biggest offer," he admits, "I ever had in one day."

Among the lesser annoyances to which Thomson was subjected in Africa was the presence of rats in the night-time, which he had to brush away like flies. Until he was asked whether there was not danger in this, it never seems to have struck him that it was more than annoying. Yet though he and the two other travellers mentioned (doubtless they are not alone in this) have put up cheerfully with almost every hardship known to man, this does not make them indifferent to the comforts of civilization when they return home. Du Chaillu was looking very comfortable in a house-boat the other day, where his hosts thought they were "roughing it"—with a male attendant; and in Stanley's easy chairs you sink to dream. The last time I saw Thomson in his rooms in London he was on his knees, gazing in silent rapture at a china saucer with a valuable crack in it.

If you ask Thomson what was the most dangerous expedition he ever embarked on, he will probably reply, "Crossing Piccadilly." The finest thing that can be said of him is that during these four expeditions he never once fired a shot at a native. Other explorers have had to do so to save their lives. There were often occasions when Thomson could have done it, to save his life to all appearance, too. The

result of his method of progressing is that where he has gone—and he has been in parts of Africa never before trod by the white man—he really has "opened up the country" for those who care to follow him. Civilization by bullet has only closed it elsewhere. Yet though there is an abundance of Scotch caution about him, he is naturally an impulsive man, more inclined personally to march straight on than to reach his destination by a safer if more circuitous route. Where only his own life is concerned he gives you the impression of one who might be rash, but his prudence at the head of a caravan is at the bottom of the faith that is placed in him. According to a story that got into the papers years ago, M. de Brazza once quarrelled with Thomson in Africa, and all but struck him. Thomson was praised for keeping his temper. The story was a fabrication, but I fear that if M. de Brazza had behaved like this, Thomson would not have remembered to be diplomatic till some time afterwards. A truer tale might be told of an umbrella, gorgeous and wonderful to behold, that De Brazza took to Africa to impress the natives with, and which Thomson subsequently presented to a dusky monarch.

The explorer has never shot a lion, though he has tracked a good many of them. Once he thought he had one. It was reclining in a little grove, and Thomson felt that it was his at last. With a trusty

native he crept forward till he could obtain a good shot, and then fired. In breathless suspense he waited for its spring, and then when it did not spring he saw that he had shot it through the heart. However, it turned out only to be a large stone.

The young Scotchman sometimes thinks of the tremendous effect it would have had on the natives had he been the possessor of a complete set of artificial teeth. This is because he has one artificial tooth. Happening to take it out one day, an awe filled all who saw him, and from that hour he was esteemed a medicine man. Another excellent way of impressing Africa with the grandeur of Britain was to take a photograph. When the natives saw the camera aimed at them they fell to the ground vanquished.

When Thomson was recently in this country, he occasionally took a walk of twenty or thirty miles to give him an appetite for dinner. This he calls a stroll. One day he strolled from Thornhill to Edinburgh, had dinner, and then went to the Exhibition. In appearance he is tall and strongly knit rather than heavily built, and if you see him more than once in the same week, you discover that he has still an interest in neckties. Perhaps his most remarkable feat consisted in taking a bottle of brandy into the heart of Africa, and bringing it back intact.

CHAPTER X

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Some men of letters, not necessarily the greatest, have an indescribable charm to which we give our hearts. Thackeray is the young man's first love. Of living authors none perhaps bewitches the reader more than Mr. Stevenson, who plays upon words as if they were a musical instrument. To follow the music is less difficult than to place the musician. A friend of mine, who, like Mr. Grant Allen, reviews 365 books a year, and 366 in leap years, recently arranged the novelists of to-day in order of merit. Meredith, of course, he wrote first, and then there was a fall to Hardy. "Haggard," he explained, "I dropped from the Eiffel Tower; but what can I do with Stevenson? I can't put him before 'Lorna Doone.'" So Mr. Stevenson puzzles the critics, fascinating them until they are willing to judge him by the great work he is to write by and by when the little books are finished. Over "Treasure Island" I let my fire die in winter without knowing that I was freezing. But the creator of Alan Breck has now

published nearly twenty volumes. It is so much easier to finish the little works than to begin the great one, for which we are all taking notes.

Mr. Stevenson is not to be labelled novelist. He wanders the byways of literature without any fixed address. Too much of a truant to be classified with the other boys, he is only a writer of fiction in the sense that he was once an Edinburgh University student because now and again he looked in at his classes when he happened to be that way. A literary man without a fixed occupation amazes Mr. Henry James, a master in the school of fiction which tells, in three volumes, how Hiram K. Wilding trod on the skirt of Alice M. Sparkins without anything's coming of it. Mr. James analyzes Mr. Stevenson with immense cleverness, but without summing up. That "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" should be by the author of "Treasure Island," "Virginibus Puerisque" by the author of "The New Arabian Nights," "A Child's Garden of Verses" by the author of "Prince Otto," are to him the three degrees of comparison of wonder, though for my own part I marvel more that the author of "Daisy Miller" should be Mr. Stevenson's eulogist. One conceives Mr. James a boy in velveteens looking fearfully at Stevenson playing at pirates.

There is nothing in Mr. Stevenson's sometimes writing essays, sometimes romances, and anon poems

to mark him versatile beyond other authors. One dreads his continuing to do so, with so many books at his back, lest it means weakness rather than strength. He experiments too long; he is still a boy wondering what he is going to be. With Cowley's candour he tells us that he wants to write something by which he may be for ever known. His attempts in this direction have been in the nature of trying different ways, and he always starts off whistling. Having gone so far without losing himself, he turns back to try another road. Does his heart fail him, despite his jaunty bearing, or is it because there is no hurry? Though all his books are obviously by the same hand, no living writer has come so near fame from so many different sides. Where is the man among us who could write another "Virginibus Puerisque," the most delightful volume for the hammock ever sung in prose? The poems are as exquisite as they are artificial. "Jekyll and Hyde" is the greatest triumph extant in Christmas literature of the morbid kind. The donkey on the Cevennes (how Mr. Stevenson belaboured him!) only stands second to the "Inland Voyage." "Kidnapped" is the outstanding boy's book of its generation. "The Black Arrow" alone, to my thinking, is second-class. We shall all be doleful if a marksman who can pepper his target with inners does not reach the bull's-eye. But it is quite time the great work was begun. The sun

sinks while the climber walks round his mountain, looking for the best way up.

Hard necessity has kept some great writers from doing their best work, but Mr. Stevenson is at last so firmly established that if he continues to be versatile it will only be from choice. He has attained a popularity such as is, as a rule, only accorded to classic authors or to charlatans. For this he has America to thank rather than Britain, for the Americans buy his books, the only honour a writer's admirers are slow to pay him. Mr. Stevenson's reputation in the United States is creditable to that country, which has given him a position here in which only a few saw him when he left. Unfortunately, with popularity has come publicity. All day the reporters sit on his garden wall.

No man has written in a finer spirit of the profession of letters than Mr. Stevenson, but this gossip vulgarizes it. The adulation of the American public and of a little band of clever literary dandies in London, great in criticism, of whom he has become the darling, has made Mr. Stevenson complacent, and he always tended perhaps to be a thought too fond of his velvet coat. There is danger in the delight with which his every scrap is now received. A few years ago, when he was his own severest and sanest critic, he stopped the publication of a book after it was in proof—a brave act. He has lost this courage, or he

would have re-written "The Black Arrow." There is deterioration in the essays he has been contributing to an American magazine, graceful and suggestive though they are. The most charming of living stylists, Mr. Stevenson is self-conscious in all his books now and again, but hitherto it has been the self-consciousness of an artist with severe critics at his shoulder. It has become self-satisfaction. The critics have put a giant's robe on him, and he has not flung it off. He dismisses "Tom Jones" with a simper. Personally Thackeray "scarce appeals to us as the ideal gentleman; if there were nothing else [what else is there?], perpetual nosing after snobbery at least suggests the snob." From Mr. Stevenson one would not have expected the revival of this silly charge, which makes a cabbage of every man who writes about cabbages. I shall say no more of these ill-considered papers, though the sneers at Fielding call for indignant remonstrance, beyond expressing a hope that they lie buried between magazine covers. Mr. Stevenson has reached the critical point in his career, and one would like to see him back at Bournemouth, writing within high walls. We want that big book; we think he is capable of it, and so we cannot afford to let him drift into the seaweed. About the writer with whom his name is so often absurdly linked we feel differently. It is as foolish to rail at Mr. Rider Haggard's complacency as it would be to blame Christopher

Sly for so quickly believing that he was born a lord.

The key-note of all Mr. Stevenson's writings is his indifference, so far as his books are concerned, to the affairs of life and death on which other minds are chiefly set. Whether man has an immortal soul interests him as an artist not a whit: what is to come of man troubles him as little as where man came from. He is a warm, genial writer, yet this is so strange as to seem inhuman. His philosophy is that we are but as the light-hearted birds. This is our moment of being; let us play the intoxicating game of life beautifully, artistically, before we fall dead from the tree. We all know it is only in his books that Mr. Stevenson can live this life. The cry is to arms; spears glisten in the sun; see the brave bark riding joyously on the waves, the black flag, the dash of red colour twisting round a mountainside. Alas! the drummer lies on a couch beating his drum. It is a pathetic picture, less true to fact now, one rejoices to know, than it was recently. A common theory is that Mr. Stevenson dreams an ideal life to escape from his own sufferings. This sentimental plea suits very well. The noticeable thing, however, is that the grotesque, the uncanny, holds his soul; his brain will only follow a coloured clue. The result is that he is chiefly picturesque, and, to those who want more than art for art's sake, never satisfying. Fascinating as his verses are, artless in the perfection of art, they take no

reader a step forward. The children of whom he sings so sweetly are cherubs without souls. It is not in poetry that Mr. Stevenson will give the great book to the world, nor will it, I think, be in the form of essays. Of late he has done nothing quite so fine as "Virginibus Puerisque," though most of his essays are gardens in which grow few weeds. Quaint in matter as in treatment, they are the best strictly literary essays of the day, and their mixture of tenderness with humour suggests Charles Lamb. Some think Mr. Stevenson's essays equal to Lamb's, or greater. To that I say No. The name of Lamb will for many a year bring proud tears to English eyes. Here was a man, weak like the rest of us, who kept his sorrows to himself. Life to him was not among the trees. He had loved and lost. Grief laid a heavy hand on his brave brow. Dark were his nights; horrid shadows in the house; sudden terrors; the heart stops beating waiting for a footstep. At that door comes Tragedy, knocking at all hours. Was Lamb dismayed? The tragedy of his life was not drear to him. It was wound round those who were dearest to him; it let him know that life has a glory even at its saddest, that humour and pathos clasp hands, that loved ones are drawn nearer, and the soul strengthened in the presence of anguish, pain, and death. When Lamb sat down to write he did not pull down his blind on all that is greatest, if most awful, in hu-

man life. He was gentle, kindly; but he did not play at pretending that there is no cemetery round the corner. In Mr. Stevenson's exquisite essays one looks in vain for the great heart that palpitates through the pages of Charles Lamb.

The great work, if we are not to be disappointed, will be fiction. Mr. Stevenson is said to feel this himself, and, as I understand, "Harry Shovel" will be his biggest bid for fame. It is to be, broadly speaking, a nineteenth-century "Peregrine Pickle," dashed with Meredith, and this in the teeth of many admirers who maintain that the best of the author is Scottish. Mr. Stevenson, however, knows what he is about. Critics have said enthusiastically—for it is difficult to write of Mr. Stevenson without enthusiasm—that Alan Breck is as good as anything in Scott. Alan Breck is certainly a masterpiece, quite worthy of the greatest of all storytellers, who, nevertheless, it should be remembered, created these rich side characters by the score, another before dinner-time. English critics have taken Alan to their hearts, and appreciate him thoroughly; the reason, no doubt, being that he is the character whom England acknowledges as the Scottish type. The Highlands, which are Scotland to the same extent as Northumberland is England, present such a character to this day, but no deep knowledge of Mr. Stevenson's native country was required to reproduce him. An

artistic Englishman or American could have done it. Scottish religion, I think, Mr. Stevenson has never understood, except as the outsider misunderstands it. He thinks it hard because there are no coloured windows. "The colour of Scotland has entered into him altogether," says Mr. James, who, we gather, conceives in Edinburgh Castle a place where tartans glisten in the sun, while rocks re-echo bagpipes. Mr. James is right in a way. It is the tartan, the claymore, the cry that the heather is on fire, that are Scotland to Mr. Stevenson. But the Scotland of our day is not a country rich in colour; a sombre grey prevails. Thus, though Mr. Stevenson's best romance is Scottish, that is only, I think, because of his extraordinary aptitude for the picturesque. Give him any period in any country that is romantic, and he will soon steep himself in the kind of knowledge he can best turn to account. Adventures suit him best, the ladies being left behind; and so long as he is in fettle it matters little whether the scene be Scotland or Spain. The great thing is that he should now give to one ambitious book the time in which he has hitherto written half a dozen small ones. He will have to take existence a little more seriously—to weave broadcloth instead of lace.

CHAPTER XI

REV. WALTER C. SMITH, D. D.

DURING the four winters another and I were in Edinburgh we never entered any but Free churches. This seems to have been less on account of a scorn for other denominations than because we never thought of them. We felt sorry for the "men" who knew no better than to claim to be on the side of Dr. Macgregor. Even our Free kirks were limited to two, St. George's and the Free High. After all, we must have been liberally minded beyond most of our fellows, for, as a rule, those who frequented one of these churches shook their heads at the other. It is said that Dr. Whyte and Dr. Smith have a great appreciation of each other. They, too, are liberally minded.

To contrast the two leading Free Church ministers in Edinburgh as they struck a student would be to become a boy again. The one is always ready to go on fire, and the other is sometimes at hand with a jug of cold water. Dr. Smith counts a hundred before he starts, whilst the minister of Free St. George's is off at once at a gallop, and would always

arrive first at his destination if he had not sometimes to turn back. He is not only a Gladstonian, but Gladstonian; his enthusiasm carries him on as steam drives the engine. Dr. Smith being a critic, with a faculty of satire, what would rouse the one man makes the other smile. Dr. Whyte judges you as you are at the moment; Dr. Smith sees what you will be like to-morrow. Some years ago the defeated side in a great Assembly fight met at a breakfast to reason itself into a belief that it had gained a remarkable moral victory. Dr. Whyte and Dr. Smith were both present, and the former was so inspiriting that the breakfast became a scene of enthusiasm. Then Dr. Smith arose and made a remark about a company of Mark Tapleys—after which the meeting broke up.

I have a curious reminiscence of the student who most frequently accompanied me to church in Edinburgh. One Sunday when we were on our way up slushy Bath Street to Free St. George's he discovered that he had not a penny for the plate. I suggested to him to give twopence next time; but no, he turned back to our lodgings for the penny. Sometime afterwards he found himself in the same position when we were nearing the Free High. "I'll give twopence next time," he said, cheerfully. I have thought this over since then, and wondered if there was anything in it.

The most glorious privilege of the old is to assist the young. The two ministers who are among the chief pillars of the Free Church in Edinburgh are not old yet, but they have had a long experience, and the strength and encouragement they have been to the young is the grand outstanding fact of their ministries. Their influence is, of course, chiefly noticeable in the divinity men, who make their Bible classes so remarkable. There is a sort of Freemasonry among the men who have come under the influence of Dr. Smith. It seems to have steadied them—to have given them wise rules of life that have taken the noise out of them, and left them undemonstrative, quiet, determined. You will have little difficulty, as a rule, in picking out Dr. Smith's men, whether in the pulpit or in private. They have his mark, as the Rugby boys were marked by Dr. Arnold. Even in speaking of him, they seldom talk in superlatives: only a light comes into their eye, and you realize what a well-founded reverence is. I met lately in London an Irishman who, when the conversation turned to Scotland, asked what Edinburgh was doing without Dr. Smith (who was in America at the time). He talked with such obvious knowledge of Dr. Smith's teaching, and with such affection for the man, that by and by we were surprised to hear that he had never heard him preach nor read a line of his works. He explained that he knew inti-

mately two men who looked upon their Sundays in the Free High, and still more upon their private talks with the minister, as the turning point in their lives. They were such fine fellows, and they were so sure that they owed their development to Dr. Smith, that to know the followers was to know something of the master. This it is to be a touchstone to young men.

There are those who think Dr. Smith the poet of higher account than Dr. Smith the preacher. I do not agree with them, though there can be no question that the author of "Olrig Grange" and Mr. Alexander Anderson are the two men now in Edinburgh who have (at times) the divine afflatus. "Surface-man" is a true son of Burns. Of him it may be said, as it never can be said of Dr. Smith, that he sings because he must. His thoughts run in harmonious numbers. The author of "Olrig Grange" is the stronger mind, however, and his lines are always pregnant of meaning. He is of the school of Mr. Lewis Morris, but an immeasurably higher intellect if not so fine an artist: indeed, though there are hundreds of his pages that are not poetry, there are almost none that could not be rewritten into weighty prose. Sound is never his sole object. Good novels in verse are a mistake, for it is quite certain they would be better in prose. The novelist has a great deal to say that cannot be said naturally in

rhythm, and much of Dr. Smith's blank verse is good prose in frills. It is driven into an undeserved confinement.

The privilege of critics is to get twelve or twenty minor poets in a row, and then blow them all over at once. I remember one who dispatched Dr. Smith with a verse from the book under treatment. Dr. Smith writes of a poet's verses: "There is no sacred fire in them, Nor much of homely sense and shrewd," and when the critic came to these lines, he stopped reading: he declared that Dr. Smith had passed judgment on himself. This is a familiar form of criticism, but in the present case it had at least the demerit of being false. There is so much sacred fire about Dr. Smith's best poetry, that it is what makes him a poet; and as for "homely sense and shrewd," he has simply more of it than any contemporary writer of verse. It is what gives heart to his satire, and keeps him from wounding merely for the pleasure of drawing blood. In conjunction with the sacred fire, the noble indignation that mean things should be, the insight into the tragic, it is what makes "Hilda" his greatest poem. Without it there could not be pathos, which is concerned with little things; nor humour, nor, indeed, the flash into men and things that makes such a poem as "Dr. Linkletter's Scholar" as true as life, as sad as death. If only for the sake of that noble piece of writing, every Scottish student should have

"North-Country Folk" in his possession. The poem is probably the most noteworthy thing that has been said of Northern University life.

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